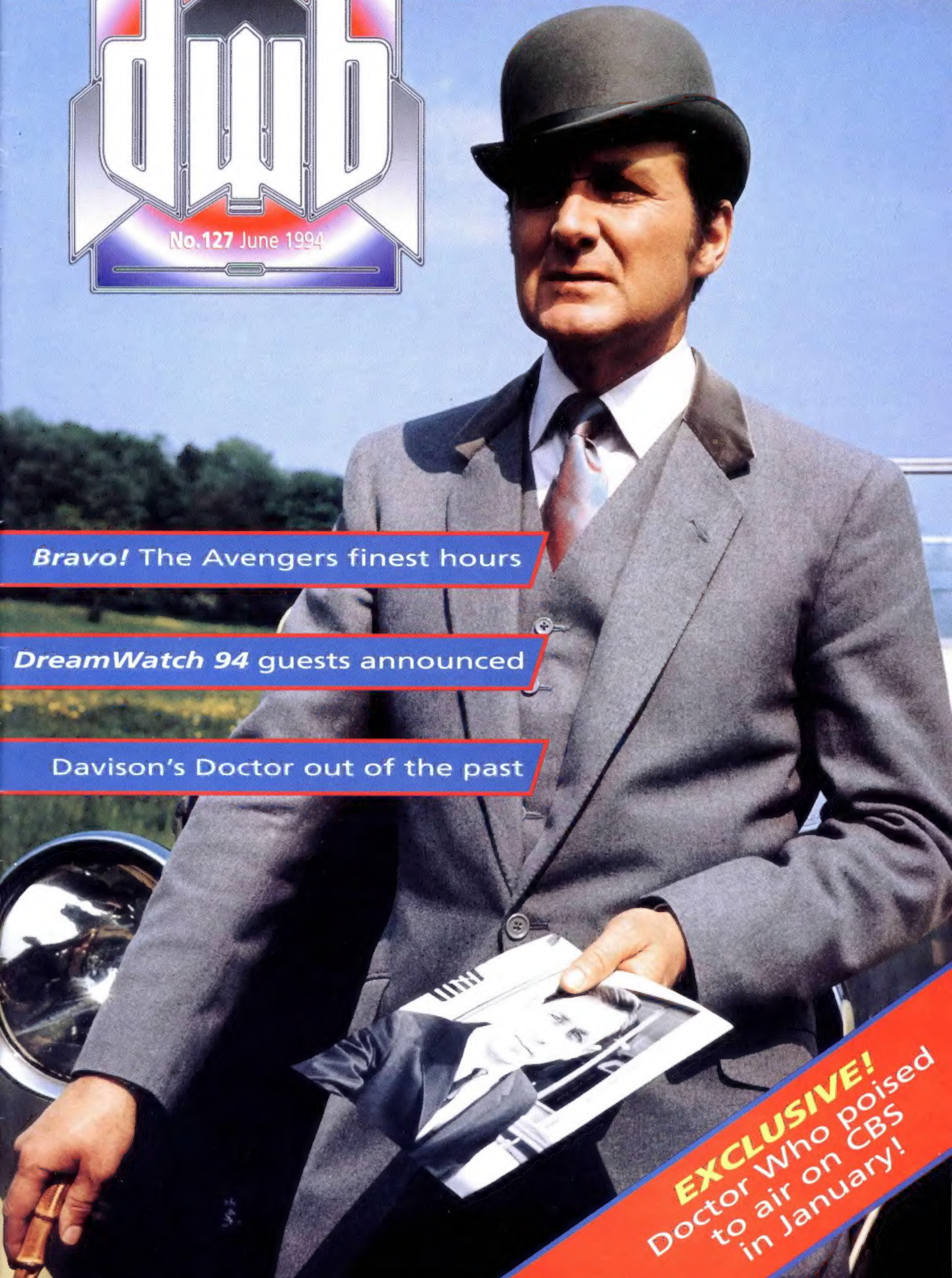
dwb

No.127 June 1994

WHO FILM OFF (again!)



Bravo! The Avengers finest hours

DreamWatch 94 guests announced

Davison's Doctor out of the past

EXCLUSIVE! Doctor Who poised to air on CBS in January!

Tired of the conventional convention slog?
Then experience...

dreamWatch

94

October 29~30 *Park Inn International, Earls Court, London*

down time *world premiere*

The official premiere of the final story in the Yeti trilogy, written by Marc Platt and directed by Christopher Barry. Starring Nicholas Courtney as the Brigadier, Deborah Watling as Victoria and Jack Watling as Professor Travers, plus special cameo appearances to be announced. The cast and crew will be present to sign copies of this exciting fifty-minute, made for video drama (entering production this summer) which will go on sale for the first time at DreamWatch 94.
A Reeltime Pictures production in association with DreamWatch Publishing.
Script Consultants: Mervyn Haisman and Henry Lincoln.

the caves of androzani

A tenth anniversary reunion of many of the cast and crew who contributed to Peter Davison's heart-stopping finale as the Doctor...

the tomorrow people

Prepare to jaunt as we unite stars from the Seventies and Nineties series...

plus

Blake's 7 - in front of and behind the camera...The Dark Dimension - the launch of the book of the inside story...Nine's Party - innovative Saturday evening entertainment...Survivors...Celebrity autographs and walkabouts...Charity auction in aid of The Terrence Higgins Trust and The Imperial Cancer Research Fund...and much, much more!

Details of our invited guests and information on the event itself will appear in all issues of DWB in the run up to DreamWatch 94, but you can guarantee your place by registering today. Places are limited and there will be a strict cut-off point, so to avoid disappointment register NOW! (Due to the exclusive nature of this event we can only accept registrations for the whole weekend and not part thereof).

The standard cost of attending DreamWatch 94 is £35 for the entire weekend (not including dinner on the Saturday evening). We are offering a concessionary rate of £25 to those in full time education, unemployed or receiving a disability allowance (in all such cases documentational proof will be required on arrival at the event). Under 12's: £15.

Please register the following for DreamWatch 94. I enclose a crossed cheque/ PO for ( ) payable to DreamWatch 94. (If registering at the concessionary rate, please indicate): ◯ **Disabled** ◯ **Student** ◯ **Unemployed**

Name(s): .....

.....

.....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Please send the whole of this portion (Photocopies acceptable).

Post to DreamWatch 94, 52 Deacon Road, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Surrey KT2 6LU. (Please enclose two SAEs, preferably A5).

Guests so far confirmed*

Downtime

Nicolas Courtney The Brigadier
John Levene Benton
Deborah Watling Ms. Waterfield
Jack Watling Travers
Marc Platt Scriptwriter
Mark Ayres Composer

The Caves of Androzani

Peter Davison The Doctor
Nicola Bryant Peri
Maurice Roëves Stotz *(plus **Doomwatch** & **Star Trek:The Next Generation**)*
Barbara Kinghorn Timmin
Graeme Harper Director *(plus **Star Cops** & **The Dark Dimension**)*
Roger Limb The BBC Radiophonic Workshop

The Tomorrow People

Nicholas Young John
Sammie Winmill Carol
Paul Bernard Director *(plus **Doctor Who**)*
Tetra Films Makers of the 90's Tomorrow People with cast and crew!

Blake's 7

Jacqueline Pearce Servalan
David Maloney Director *(plus Doctor Who)*
James Follett Scriptwriter *(plus Earthsearch)*

The Survivors

Denis Lill Charles Vaughn *(plus Doctor Who)*
Lucy Fleming Jenny Richards
John Abineri Hubert *(plus **Doctor Who**)*
Roger Parkes Scriptwriter *(plus **Blake's 7**)*
Martin Worth Scriptwriter *(plus Doomwatch)*

*Plus **Ian Scoones** and **Mat Irvine**, stalwarts of the BBC Visual Effects Dept., who will be providing the "blood, bangs and flashes" for Nine's Party...**Adrian Rigelsford**, author of the doomed **Doctor Who** 30th Anniversary adventure - **The Dark Dimension**...plus surprise guest appearances!*
Many more to be announced!

*Subject to unforeseen professional commitments

DreamWatch Bulletin 127
PO Box 1015
Brighton BN2 2YU
E-Mail: abrowne@cix.compulink.co.uk

Executive Editor/Newsdesk • Gary Leigh
Editor • Anthony Brown
Design Consultant • Gary Wales
Subscription Manager • Roma Bendel

Some magazines have a thing called The Tiny Zone, an area of microscopic print at the bottom of the editorial page where they rabbit on senselessly without any rhyme or reason, confident that only one reader in a thousand will even glance there. Now I don't know why this comes to mind, but as I sit here I just can't think of anything I want to say in this column. The movie's dead after all it seems, just as it seemed to be getting somewhere at last, and the Amblin bid faces its judgement day. BABYLON 5 starts on Monday, and the *intriguing* conclusions to a number of series have just gone out in the States, and should be reaching here soon. In fact, there's a lot of things *about* to happen...It's just that at the *moment* things seem a little quiet!

Mind you, that's not to say the last few weeks haven't been hectic, particularly with the marathon Blue Box convention (the first DOCTOR WHO convention, so far as I know, to last a full three days!) following a few weeks after Manopticon, with grave consequences for my bank balance! But guess what - I've managed to fill this space!

ANTHONY

CONTENTS

Letters 7
The Avengers: Some Notes on Style 9
The Visitation review 14
Black Orchid review 15
Deep Space Nine episode guide 16
Next Generation episode guide 17
DWB Interview file review 19
Paradise of Death book review 19
Theatre of War book review 19
The Avengers video reviews 20
Star Trek book reviews 24
Elisabeth Sladen interview 25

Cover: *John Steed (Patrick MacNee) at the wheel of his Bentley - The Super Secret Cypher Snatch (© Lumière)*
Back cover: *A portrait of Tara King - Linda Thorson (© Lumière)*

THANKS TO: J Jeremy Bentham, Tony Clark, Anthony McKay, Anthony Clark, BBS Listings, BBC Video, Virgin Books, and anyone I've forgotten.

NEXT ISSUE:

Twenty Years after he joined the series, Tom Baker interviewed...
Destiny of the Daleks:unfairly criticised?
OUT OF THE UNKNOWN - the BBC's classic SF anthology.
Convention round up, from Aylcon through Manopticon to Blue Box.
***THE NEW AVENGERS* reviews.**
and the latest news on the future of WHO...

CBS POISED TO SIGN ON THE DOTTED LINE...

Doctor Who set to air next January

DOCTOR WHO could be back on TV screens by next January — if current negotiations between Amblin and major US network CBS prove fruitful.

Philip Segal, the influential head of Amblin's television division, has been revealed as the major player in Amblin's camp whose idea it was to pursue DOCTOR WHO, and who is now negotiating to tie up the deal with the Head of CBS Entertainment — Peter Tortorici — of its viability.

DWB has learned that Segal, described as "a major supporter of DOCTOR WHO", finally sold the idea to an initially disinterested Steven Spielberg and his accountants only after thousands of letters started pouring in to Amblin and Universal's offices from fans around the world following initial disclosures of the company's possible involvement with the series.

An impressed Spielberg sanctioned the deal in the hope that DOCTOR WHO will be his elusive beast — a television science fiction series of his own on a par with STAR TREK - THE NEXT GENERATION, whose success he has been keen to emulate.

With a major network now interested, the current stumbling block appears to be Tortorici, who is (reportedly) totally unfamiliar with DOCTOR WHO and similarly unaware of its massive following. If he signs the deal, then a two-part premiére and twelve subsequent 48-minute episodes will be made in time for DOCTOR WHO to return as a 'mid-season replacement' next January.

Tortorici is said to be on the verge of making his decision, which could spell one of two things for DOCTOR WHO. A renaissance if he signs the deal, possible death if he doesn't. A sudden groundswell of opinion from fans might just help to sway his judgment,

if we can all send him polite, articulate and well-researched (preferably typed) letters explaining why CBS should sign. Letters should be short and succinct, but coherently state DOCTOR WHO's selling points and the reasons behind its enduring success. Let him know that DOCTOR WHO has a following every bit as devoted, dedicated and vocal as that of STAR TREK!

If you want to be a part of DOCTOR WHO's future, then write to him NOW: Mr. Peter Tortorici, Head of CBS Entertainment, 7600 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, California 90036, USA or fax his office direct on (0101) 213-653-8276. **More on page 4...**

WHO MOVIE STALLS AS BBC REFUSES TO RENEW RIGHTS

BBC ENTERPRISES has acted quickly to retrieve the DOCTOR WHO movie rights — after the Lumiére Pictures-backed UK production company Daltenreys failed to get the film rolling by the April 27 deadline.

The exclusive rights were originally acquired by Coast to Coast (aka Green Light) back in 1987 and have been constantly renewed as each expiry date arrived, recently transferring to Daltenreys with backing from Lumiére and a US studio rumoured to be Fox. Indeed it is this constant stalling that has proven to be the stumbling block for any new WHO being made since it ceased being an inhouse BBC production in 1989. It is known, for example, that talks between the BBC and Amblin faltered at one stage because the US company wanted a production monopoly over DOCTOR WHO.

With the rights now back at the BBC, the corporation knows it will be able to name its price if the up and coming DOCTOR WHO revival proves to be a success, and hopes to reap huge dividends.

Daltenreys, established in 1989, is believed to have invested half a million pounds in the movie, and apparently naively assumed that the rights would again be immediately renewed when it failed to enter production in time due to a reported falling out with the script's author, Nicholas Meyer. Sources close to the production suggest that the script was "not very DOCTOR WHO" and that it was in need of some tailoring.

Pre-production work was well-advanced but shrouded in secrecy from the start, with seemingly everyone from the key players to the operator on Lumiére's switchboard apparently sworn to secrecy. All the production personnel - including director Leonard Nimoy and producer Felice Arden of Green Light - were poised for action when the plug was pulled, and Daltenreys is currently seeking legal advice from a top media law firm in an effort to retrieve the rights.

Industry sources suggest that if and when a film is eventually made, it will be by Amblin in keeping with the continuity of the television series, ala STAR TREK - THE NEXT GENERATION.

The film's termination ironically coincided with the news that this year's Cannes Film Festival will, with the exception of Warner Bros, be devoid of an American invasion due to the lack of new product that can be ready in time, thereby guaranteeing European film makers a greater share of the limelight...

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: A one year subscription (12 issues) costs £33/US$69 (or £35/$79 for first-class card-reinforced envelopes). Make cheques/POs payable to 'DWB' and send to: *DWB Subscriptions, 5 Whitegate Gardens, Harrow-Weald, Middlesex HA3 6BW.*
CLUBS & LOCAL GROUPS: Purchase DWB in bulk for your members at 50p off the cover price (min. 6 issues). SAE to P.O. box for details.

ADVERTISING RATES AND CONDITIONS: Classified ads - £3.95 for up to 45 words (10p per additional word). FAN: one page (A4 camera ready) £140; half page (192x130/93x265mm) £70; quarter page (93x130/44x265mm); £35; sixth page (61x130mm) £25; eighth page (44x130mm/93x63mm) £18. COMMERCIAL: one page £180; half page £90; quarter page £45; sixth page £32; eighth page £23. •Full colour rates available on request. •Prices inclusive of VAT. •15% discount available for three or more insertions. •10% discount for charity-related ventures. •Adverts must be camera ready and of a tidy appearance, surrounded by a neat black box conforming to the exact dimension. Adverts which do not comply to this criteria will be returned.

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SPIELBERG VOWS TO MAINTAIN THE "BRITISHNESS" OF WHO

Alan Rickman now favourite to lead

STEVEN SPIELBERG, in Britain recently to receive his two BAFTA awards for *Schindler's List*, made his first press statement regarding Amblin's plans for the new look DOCTOR WHO.

Seemingly aware of a degree of concern surrounding his company's involvement with the series, he told reporters: "I could not imagine DOCTOR WHO being played by an American actor...it must retain its Britishness." He also confirmed that he will be directing at least one episode, and that *Alien/Blade Runner/Thelma and Louise* supremo Ridley Scott will direct the two-part premiere wildly rumoured to involve the Daleks kidnapping the Doctor's father...

While Spielberg was rubbing shoulders with Barbra Streisand during her sellout Wembley stint, new DOCTOR WHO producer Peter Wagg and Philip Segal attended an impromptu display of props and costumes from the original series laid on by DOCTOR WHO Exhibitions organiser Lorne Martin, indicating that Amblin will be aiming for a degree of visual continuity with the original series. It is understood that during his visit Spielberg opened an office at Pinewood for "a forthcoming production", which could in fact be the UK base for any one of a number of future projects up his sleeve, including the fourth entry into the *Indiana Jones* canon. .

Ongoing discussions with the BBC — who as co-producers will retain a say in DOCTOR WHO's artistic direction — are now said to be at such an advanced and amicable stage that a formal announcement could be made as soon as June, three months earlier than the anticipated launching pad of September's MTFE television fair in Los Angeles.

*•**Alan Rickman**, the critically-acclaimed British actor whose many roles include the Sheriff of Nottingham in Robin Hood - Prince of Thieves and the arch villain in Die Hard, is the latest contender hotly-tipped to win the coveted role of the eighth Doctor, following Richard O'Brien's hasty disassociation from the project.*

*•**The BBC** is reportedly keen to premiére The New Adventures of DOCTOR WHO - as it has been dubbed in some quarters - to coincide with its debut on American screens, which could pave the way for its return to British television as early as January 1995...*

'VISIONSGATE' TAKES NEW TWIST

CONCERN over apparent misdemeanours involving the showing of *Dimensions in Time* at last November's Visions '93 convention in Chicago continues to grow, with the disclosure that the fundraising operation in itself may have constituted a federal offence.

A DWB reader with contacts in the State of Illinois Federal Attorney's Office - who wishes to remain anonymous - has called into question the legality of charging attendees at the event to see the twelve-minute escapade. He has brought to our attention Section 2a of Illinois' The Solicitation for Charity Act, passed in 1963, which clearly states: *"Every charitable organisation...which solicits or intends to solicit contributions from persons in this state or which is located in this state, by any means whatsoever shall, prior to any solicitation, file with the attorney general..."*. However the event does not appear to have been registered in the state under any official title (i.e. Children in Need/Dimensions in Time) or authorised organiser (i.e. John Nathan-Turner/Gary Downie), an apparently unfortunate oversight in the duo's admirable last minute haste to stage the fundraising which could, nonetheless, lead to some rather uncomfortable questions being asked should they ever return to Illinois.

Meanwhile, Section 16a of the act states: *"Any person who...misuses charitable assets is subject to punitive damages in an appropriate amount..."* The sum involved has to be at least $1000 over a three-year period, but the disparity between the amount of cash announced by the authorised sellers of the 800 pairs of 3D spectacles provided by the CHILDREN IN NEED office - $4600 - fell *several thousands of dollars* short of the total amount estimated to have been collected by hundreds of *extra* pairs of 3D specs allegedly smuggled into the event and sold by an unknown party (see DWB123). If an offence *has* been committed, the perpetrator(s) could be found guilty of a Class 2 felony and sentenced to three to five years in prison, together with a fine of up to $50,000 - plus repayment of all misappropriated funds, arguably a fitting punishment for anyone who would cynically exploit an already desperate situation...

DWB would again like to hear from anyone who purchased 3D specs from anyone other than guests of the event, or who can shed any light on this mystery that just won't fade away...

TAVERN MOVES!

BUT only by a week. With the Fitzroy Tavern closed on June 2nd, June's get-together of DOCTOR WHO fans will be held on the 9th June instead.

briefly...

•FOLLOWING the latest setback for the THIRTY YEARS IN THE TARDIS video as reported last issue, director Kevin Davies has asked us to assure readers that although the project has been cut back to ninety minutes as opposed to three hours as originally envisaged, it will still include everything in the transmitted version, *"plus a lot more besides..."*. He has until August to finish the project, indicating that BBC Video will be aiming the release at the Christmas market...

•TO BOLDLY GO where no ex-Time Lord... A recent edition of THIS MORNING arranged a live link-up to LA enabling Jon Pertwee to 'interview' William Shatner, but what promised to be a confrontation of epic proportions soon turned out to be very lame indeed as the duo proceeded to massage each others' egos. *"It's amazing our paths haven't crossed before..."*, Jon began. Come back Terry Wogan...

•FROM MID-MAY, American fans can access interactive information about the latest US DOCTOR WHO video releases via Hollywood Online - a subsidiary of America Online - a computer modem service with 700,000 subscribers. The programme runs for 30 minutes and incorporates digital video clips, animation, sound and text. For fans not hooked up to the database service, the programme is available on floppy disc compatible with either the Macintosh or Windows formats, and is available free to purchasers of two or more DOCTOR WHO videos...

•VIRGIN's own DOCTOR WHO version of the STAR TREK *Nit-Pickers Guide* by Cornell, Topping and Day has been retitled *The Discontinuity Guide*...

Coming Soon...

Just Out and May

19th **THE NEW ADVENTURES** - *Theatre of War* (Justin Richards)
23rd **DEEP SPACE NINE** - *Cardassians/Melora* (video)
26th ***DOCTOR WHO Classic Comics*** 21 (£2.50)

June

SPACE 1999 - *Dorzac/Devil's Planet* (video)
RANDALL & HOPKIRK DECEASED - *A Sentimental Journey/Somebody Just Walked Over My Grave* (video)
RANDALL & HOPKIRK DECEASED - *Just for the Record/The Man from Nowhere* (video)
6th **THE TRIPODS** - Volume Three (video)
6th **SPACE VETS** (video)
6th **STAR TREK** - *The Lost Years: Traitor Winds* (LA Graf)
6th **STARFLEET ACADEMY** - *To Capture the Flag* (John Voornholt)
6th **THE NEXT GENERATION** - *All Good Things* (Novelisation - Michael Jan Friedman)
6th **THE NEXT GENERATION** - *Dark Page/Attached* (video)
9th **DEEP SPACE NINE** - *Rules of Acquisition/Necessary Evil* (video)
9th ***DOCTOR WHO Magazine 215*** *(£2.50)*
16th **THE NEW ADVENTURES** - *All Consuming Fire* (Andy Lane)
16th ***DOCTOR WHO Programme Guide*** (Jean Marc L'Officier - revised)
23rd STAR TREK - *Trek to Madworld* (Stephen Goldin)
23rd ***DOCTOR WHO Classic Comics*** **22** (£2.50)

July

4th **DOCTOR WHO** - *Destiny of the Daleks* (video)
4th **DOCTOR WHO** - *The Visitation/Black Orchid* (video)
4th **THE TRIPODS** - Volume Four (video)
4th **THE NEXT GENERATION** - *Q-Squared* (Peter David - hardback)
4th **STAR TREK** - *Shadows on the Sun* (Michael Jan Friedman - paperback)
4th **RED DWARF V** - *Holoship* (video)
4th(?) BLAKE'S 7 - video tape price cut (?)
7th ***DOCTOR WHO MAGAZINE 216*** (£2.50)
11th **THE NEXT GENERATION** - *Force of Nature/Inheritance* (video)
11th **DEEP SPACE NINE** - *Second Sight/Sanctuary* (video)
21st **THE NEW ADVENTURES** - *Blood Harvest* (Terrance Dicks)
21st **THE MISSING ADVENTURES** - *Goth Opera* (Paul Cornell)
21st ***DOCTOR WHO Classic Comics 23*** (£2.50)

MARVEL KEEPS 'EM COMING!!

BLAKE'S 7 title to tie-in with repeats

THE TEAM behind the DOCTOR WHO titles at Marvel UK, not content with producing twenty-four monthly magazines, several special issues and a yearbook - all to the highest of standards - have added a BLAKE'S 7 Special to their 1994 workload.

Scheduled for publication August 4 at £2.99, the 52 page, full colour magazine, predominantly written by DWM archivist Andrew Pixley, marks a return to Marvel for the BBC series which once enjoyed its own, albeit shortlived, magazine title. It will contain "*the ultimate episode guide*", as described by co-editor Marcus Hearn, with a cover by Alister Pearson. A BLAKE'S 7 annual has also been proposed...

The magazine was given the go-ahead by Marvel's top brass following BBC2's recent assurance that it will repeat BLAKE'S 7 this September, instead of May as previously planned, but the acquisition of the series by UK Gold has cast further doubt on the station's ability to stick to its plans. BBC2 often changes its schedules with little notice and drops new programmes in at a whim and with no pre-publicity, hence the lack of advance programme warning for the station in magazines like DWB.

Meanwhile this summer's DOCTOR WHO Special hits the shelves on July 14th, and with a difference. Designed to cater for vintage and modern WHO afficionadoes alike, it will feature archives on *100,000 Years B.C.* and *Survival*, interviews with William Hartnell (unpublished, circa 1965) and Sylvester McCoy, a two-part comic strip featuring the first and seventh Doctors, a follow-up to the much-acclaimed The Dawn of DOCTOR WHO, and more besides. There will be *two* front covers, one featuring Alister Pearson's *An Unearthly Child* artwork, with his

Survival novelisation painting on the flipside, and the corresponding contents from each Doctor will form each half of the magazine up to the centre pages.

This year's Marvel Yearbook, published July 27, will follow the format of its predecessor, containing an abundance of quality new fiction from the cream of THE NEW ADVENTURES authors punctuated with articles by several well-known WHO celebrities.

•**DWM** is set for a rise in cover price to £2.75 from issue 217, but to compensate that issue will feature extra pages to incorporate a self-contained Telesnap Archive of *The Macra Terror*. In the meantime, following *The Web of Fear* will be *The Wheel in Space*. Classic Comics will remain at £2.50.

•***DWM214**, out June 9 (above), includes a controversial Janet Fielding interview, a TENTH PLANET archive with many previously undisclosed facts, the missing Peter Davison story 'Hex' by Hazel Adair and Peter Ling, and more.*

briefly...

•**TWO MORE PBS stations are in** the throes of dropping DOCTOR WHO from their schedules, this time WENH, Channel 11 in Durham - the last remaining New England station to run the show and whose latest contract runs out in June - and Iowa Public TV who will be discontinuing the re-runs in the autumn. It is hoped that a formal announcement by Amblin will help revive flagging interest in the old series which, just a few years ago, was a staple feature of just about every PBS station but is now down to just a handful... (*PR*)

•**THE PRECISE order of BBC** Video's autumn release for '94 remains in doubt, but *The Seeds of Doom* is now likely to be released in November, while *The Rescue* & *The Romans* move to September. *Revelation of the Daleks* and *The Green Death*, originally scheduled for May and March respectively may now be released in October...

PROGRESS ON TIMESLIP 2?

VICTOR PEMBERTON has just returned from ITC in Los Angeles where he resumed major legal talks with the company in a bid to get the much-mooted revival of TIMESLIP off the ground.

He is currently negotiating the rights - owned by ITC - to develop a sequel to the original Seventies series utilising the same cast, including Cheryl Burfield and Spencer Banks. Zenith has expressed an interest in coming in on the project as a major co-producer with Pemberton's own production company, Saffron.

Peter Bryant, producer on DOCTOR WHO during Pemberton's involvement with the series in the Sixties, and currently employed by Saffron, would be an associate producer on the project should it get the go-ahead. The negotiations could be affected by a proposed takeover bid by the multi-media giant Pearson, which acquired Thames' entire back catalogue in 1993...

AVENGERS GUIDE PULPED

VIRGIN are to pulp the entire print-run of their recently printed AVENGERS Programme Guide, due to allegedly defamatory remarks contained within its pages.

Originally scheduled for release in March at £4.99, Virgin had second thoughts about issuing the book after warnings about certain unflattering references contained within its pages were made by prominent AVENGERS-phile Dave Rogers, who had managed to obtain advance proofs of the book, and who informed cast and writers from the series of references they might find embarrassing. Although the passages in question are ***not*** believed to be libellous, and the book indeed takes a considerably more circumspect attitude towards one controversy in particular than some other writers, Virgin were advised (on consulting their legal department) to pulp the book and will not be publishing an amended version, much to the disappointment of its authors Martin Day, Keith Topping and Paul Cornell.

•**Virgin** are preparing *Twilight Zone*, *Addams Family* and *Munsters* programme guides for1995, and an updated version of the RED DWARF Programme Guide for next January. A new version of the BLAKE'S 7 Programme Guide goes on sale in December.

OPINION

This is not the first occasion in recent years when writers and researchers have found covering THE AVENGERS more trouble than it is worth, a factor which perhaps explains the dearth of AVENGERS reference books.

Whereas a score of DOCTOR WHO reference books have expanded upon the subject since the publication of Jean Marc L'Officier's Programme Guide , to the point where the original version seems positively ante-diluvian, the repackaged (and, it now proves, somewhat inaccurate) version of Dave Rogers' 1982 AVENGERS guide remains the only work on the series available. While somewhat opinionated (as might be expected of its authors), Virgin's Programme Guide represented an admirable attempt to bring a fresh perspective to the subject, while incorporating information and corrections which have emerged since the publication of Rogers' book and whose publication is long overdue.

Similarly, it is not through lack of interest that the official AVENGERS fan club has remained the only AVENGERS fan group, and its highly irregular magazine Stay Tuned the only magazine devoted to the series. While the 'exclusive licence' granted to most official fan clubs is usually applied with generous licence — organisations such as the DWAS and the Official STAR TREK Fan Club accepting that smaller fan groups help raise the profile of the show they support and its official fandom — rival AVENGERS groups have found themselves subject to swift warnings from the club. It is difficult not to conclude that the surprisingly low profile of AVENGERS fandom in this country is connected to the obstacles in the way of those seeking to take an interest...

Anthony Brown

seaQuest renewed!

AGAINST ALL expectations, SEAQUEST DSV has been renewed for a second season.

NBC's Entertainment President Warren Littlefield confirmed the renewal on April 21st by commenting that SEAQUEST had performed well in one of the toughest slots in television — a statement somewhat at odds with the series' meteoric decline from its initial ratings heights. More significant, however, in securing the renewal appear to have been respectable demographics amongst young adults, and signs of improvements in the four episodes held back for transmission in late Spring. Early response from American viewers to the second of these, a science fiction episode entitled *Such Great Patience* concerning an alien space-craft grounded on the sea floor, has been among the best of the season, and the second season is expected to foreground SF elements still further.

For its second season, SEAQUEST will be moving production to Florida in pursuit of cheap overheads, and easy access to the ocean. Unfortunately however this will mean at least one unwelcome cast change — Stephanie Beacham is unwilling to leave California, and her character (Dr Kristin Westphalen), who embarked upon a relationship with Roy Scheider's Captain Bridger towards the season's end, is likely to be written out. Ironically, potential departures for most *other* regular characters were established in the season finalé, as promotions and retirements beckon for several characters... but the most significant departure may be the seaQuest itself...

•*SEAQUEST returns to ITV in July with the following episodes: Photon Bullet; Better Than Martians; Nothing But the Truth; Greed for a Pirate's Dream; Whale Song; The Stinger; Hide and Seek (with William Shatner); The Last Lap at Luxury; Abalon (featuring Charlton Heston); Such Great Patience; The Good Death; An Ocean on Fire*

•*UK transmission order may perhaps differ, as several episodes produced (and apparently set) after Last Lap at Luxury were run before it by NBC!*

TITLE CHANGE FOR TNG FILM

THE NEW STAR TREK film has officially dropped the roman numerals from its title and is now *STAR TREK: Generations*. Maybe the producers - who have heard plenty of criticism of the script already - got tired of being reminded that the even-numbered films are always better than the odd-numbered ones!

Production got off to a shaky start with the filming of the last TNG episode running over and the film also falling several days behind schedule while doing initial shooting with the original series cast members. TNG's *All Good Things* took three weeks to film with cast members sometimes spending over 20 hours at a time at the studio to get the series finalé completed. That pressure, plus the trauma of closing down the series after seven years of working together, had many of the cast questioning why it was necessary to rush straight into filming a movie.

More then a few people have also questioned why Paramount insisted on ending the series when it is still a hit and highly profitable. Rick Berman has been insisting to everyone that it was a front office decision, not his choice. In any case, it is clear that almost all the cast was willing to return for more tv episodes.

Instead, they are staggering into the film with almost no break and face the prospect of small roles for most of them in *Generations*. In addition, the studio - newly acquired by Viacom at a huge price after a bidding war with QVC - has been cutting back on the film budget at every turn since January. The latest goal is to hold the line at $20 million, which would make it by far the least expensive STAR TREK film. Paramount insists that the ILM effects will still be first rate, but cuts have been made in location shooting and other areas.

New uniforms - which might also be used on VOYAGER - had to be scrapped after they came back looking cheap and ill-fitting. Instead, Riker will be wearing a DS9 uniform for variety and everyone else will make do with the series uniforms. Novice feature film director David Carson got into trouble by requesting too many takes when he started out. Still, optimism has begun to emerge as the cast buckles down to the task of "overcoming the script," as one put it.

Bill Shatner can usually be counted upon to stir controversy, in one way or another. He became the talk of the lot after he failed to recognise Jonathan Frakes when the latter stopped by the film production office and came over to introduce himself to Captain Kirk. Shatner went into a tirade about keeping autograph hunters out of his way and stormed off - leaving Paramount employees to joke that the film was going to be the sequel to *Grumpy Old Men*.

STAR TREK: Generations is proving thus far impossible for Paramount to keep under wraps. New leaks appear almost daily as production continues.

Spoiler information follows:

** One of the early scenes filmed took place on an old fashioned sailing ship. This will be the site of a holodeck ceremony honouring Worf's (long overdue) promotion to Lt. Commander. In the film, Worf and Doctor Crusher end up in the water...on the film set, Marina Sirtis kept getting seasick as they used a real ship in rather rough weather. Patrick Stewart and Jonathan Frakes sang a rather salty song for the ship's crew.*

** One of those "things we never did on TV" scenes will take place in Geordi's bathroom, with a rear nude shot (of course). Just what the world has been waiting for! However, the exposed bottom is being supplied by a body double, not Levar Burton.*

** Picard gets more motivation for his grief. It will now not just be his brother who has been killed but also his young nephew, Rene, seen in Family.*

** Data will get his emotion chip.*

** The Enterprise goes down with a warp core breach in the battle section and the saucer section crashes into a planet.*

** Whoopi Goldberg is filming her scenes now so Guinan will appear in the film after failing to make it into a single seventh season episode - the only year she has missed since starting the role of Guinan in the second season. The film explains how Guinan acquired her sixth sense for time distortions.*

WARNERS LOSING NETWORK WAR?

LAST WINTER both Warners and Paramount announced plans to create their own television networks by signing up independent stations to carry two nights of programming to begin with.

All analysts at the time warned that there were barely enough independent stations left for one new network to have a fighting chance of succeeding. Warners planned to offer its existing three hours of syndicated drama - BABYLON 5, TIME TRAX, and KUNG FU - THE LEGEND CONTINUES - as the basis for its network startup. Paramount announced that a new STAR TREK series - VOYAGER - would anchor their network.

Well, the battle has been fought in markets all over the country and as the smoke clears, Warners has nothing to smile about. Paramount has signed up more stations, including some that backed out of earlier commitments to Warners. *Variety* has reported that Warners may only offer two hours of programming instead of four and is thinking of using sitcoms instead of the more expensive dramas for this purpose. BABYLON 5 supporters learned that a decision was pending in early May as to whether or not the series would get a green light for another season and set about soliciting letters of support to send to Warners executives - while complaining about Paramount using the lure of TREK to "gobble" up the available market and shut out the competition.

If B5 is renewed it is unclear if it will be syndicated in the same way as this season or if there will still be a Warners network.

Paramount has announced that it will air its network shows on Monday and Tuesday nights starting in January, with three hours of drama and 1 of sitcoms. VOYAGER is the only series as yet announced and is supposed to start filming as soon as the TNG feature film is completed, guaranteeing that one third of Paramount's soundstages remain devoted to TREK.

FOX SCHEDULES SCI-FI

FOX TELEVISION network has approved M.A.N.T.I.S. for production as a regular series in the Fall. In addition, the network is considering launching an INVADERS mini-series project.

FOX'S X-FILES continues to be the most critically acclaimed new drama series of the year and it has begun to pick up a larger audience. The season finalé on May 13 featured the death of a continuing character and the seeming termination of the unit after an investigation into the use of alien DNA.

Kathleen Toth

briefly...

•SHE WOLF OF LONDON finally made it to Britain on May 9 for a run on Sky One. It has a distinction of being a British series - the first 14 episodes were shot in the UK before a transfer to the US and change of title to LOVE AND CURSES - never before seen on home soil... The British episodes of this outrageous cross between a Carry On film and a horror movie culminate with one set at an SF convention...

•FORMER POP ICON Toyah Wilcox is involved in producing and acting in a new SF series called TRAVELLING LIGHT, which will draw on her experiences with the pop industry to tell the story of an all-girl band travelling through time. She has asked Kevin Davies - who directed her segments in THIRTY YEARS IN THE TARDIS - to be involved. Toyah has also filmed THE INK THIEF - a life action/animation children's fantasy - with Richard O'Brien...

•CASTING is complete for Orion's forthcoming fully illustrated, computer-generated HITCH HIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY coffee table book, to be published in September. Francis Johnson from BROOKSIDE will play the first ever black Zaphod Beeblebrox, while Douglas Adams himself and his distinguished literary agent, Ed Victor, have taken the roles of cops Shooty and Bang Bang in an elaborate set piece shot by top Sixties photographer, Michael Joseph, at London nightclub Stringfellows on April 28 for the *Star Wars* cantina-like scene...

•RED DWARF VII will now definitely not be transmitted until 1995, with the planned Christmas special slipping until the end of **that** year...

•RICHARD ARNOLD has been booked to appear at *The Neutral Zone*, the STAR TREK convention being held at The Forte Crest Hotel in Newcastle Upon Tyne on March 10-12 next year. SAE to 16 Annandale, Darlington, Co. Durham DL1 3QX for more details...

•*ALIEN NATION: Dark Horizon* is a two-hour movie from Fox Star Productions about to enter production in LA - four years after the show was cancelled despite a massive phone and letter-writing campaign. It will continue where the series left off, when the Newcomers were being threatened by an artificially created plague. All of the original cast are returning, as well as the writing team of Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider, with the series' creator, Kenneth Johnson, directing. It will be aired on Fox in the autumn... (*PR*)

•CBS this month transmitted TWILIGHT ZONE: ROD SERLING'S LOST CLASSICS, based on two previously unused scripts found by Serling's widow, Carol, several years ago. *The Theater*, a 30-minute Rod Serling story, centres around two lovers, Melissa (Amy Irving) and Jim (Gary Cole) who go to the movies regularly. One night Melissa goes alone and sees, on the screen, a movie about her life, past, present and future... *Where the Dead Are*, a 90-minute story from TWILIGHT veteran Richard Matheson, revolves around Dr. Ben Ramsey, played by Patrick Bergin, a surgeon in the late 1800s who notices an old wound on a patient who should not have survived... CBS aired the original series between 1959-64... (*PR*)

•PATRICK STEWART will return to London after filming *STAR TREK: Generations* to appear in a West End production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*... (*PR*)

•STEWART was nominated for two Evening Standard awards, for Best Entertainment and as Best Actor for his Christmas season of *A Christmas Carol*, but won only the former.

•BABYLON 5 has changed its planned running order since we went to press last issue: *By Any Means Necessary* has swapped places with *Signs and Portents*, while *TKO* will swap with *The Quality of Mercy*. *TKO* will now be the final episode of the spring batch, with *Quality* slipping back to the autumn...

Last Minute Renewal for Lois and Clark

LOIS AND CLARK was at last formally renewed after transmission of a season finalé which saw several plotlines reach unexpectedly early conclusions.

Previously, the producers had indicated that they hoped to keep audiences dangling for several years over many points, but the two part finalé included developments which suggested they feared cancellation, and will require some explanation at the start of season two...

The second season of LOIS AND CLARK is expected to contain a greater emphasis on action in an attempt to improve the series' demographics, with more guest villains facing Superman — a move which may alienate the series' existing fans...

•The final four episodes of the season are...Vatman; Fly Hard; Barbarians at the Planet and House of Luthor

Flipside to the Other Side...

David Patterson
NSW, Australia

I feel compelled to offer the following response to Kate Orman's *The Other Side* (DWB123), lest it be thought representative of all Australian fans. It is not my aim to drag up the JNT issue yet again, although some comment thereon is inevitable given the content of Kate's piece. Though her desire to "put a bit of the fun back into fandom" is (in my opinion) thoroughly commendable, I honestly find some of her logic so flawed as to be laughable.

It should be pointed out (in case anyone assumes otherwise) that Kate's account of Australian fandom circa 1985 is not from first hand experience, since she did not enter the ring until some years later. Doubtless it is very easy for her to look back and think how silly we were, since no matter how thorough her research, she did not experience the events and must surely find it very difficult to comprehend how people like Antony Howe actually felt at the time.

Furthermore, the article is peppered with violations of Kate's own most sacred rule: never confuse fact with opinion. Examples include her statements that *The Twin Dilemma* was not representative of what was to come, and that certain occurances ('85 hiatus, shortened seasons etc.) were not JNT's fault. And the latter is surely the most absurd point in the article. Of course those decisions were "out of his hands" - but surely they could have been consequences of others that were not?

I do not find it at all peculiar that fandom is "so laid back these days" compared with the hysteria of nearly a decade ago. The prior belief by many fans (myself included) that DOCTOR WHO was immortal and invulnerable was brutally shattered by the 1985 postponement and needless to say, all hell broke loose. Nine years later, the furore is bound to have died down, just as New York has remained relatively clear of John Lennon fans (singing Imagine in hoarse voices and milling in tiny circles) for much of the last fourteen.

Many early criticisms concerning Colin Baker were not of his performance as the Doctor, which we had not seen, but rather, of the decision to cast him as the Doctor, based on what we had seen, and on what was known of the circumstances — that there were no auditions, and that the choice was allegedly based on Colin's entertainment value as a wedding guest. Kate neglects Stephen Collins' editorial in *Zerinza 30/31*, which expressed grave concerns over the wisdom of Colin's choice, but nonetheless concluded that these concerns were based on past performances, and that "We must give the man a chance to do his best". *Zerinza 32*, with which the 'propaganda' supposedly began, also carried the results of a survey conducted a year earlier, showing a 31% 'unfavourable' reaction to Colin's casting compared with 24% 'favourable' and 45% undecided.

The same applied to the hiring of Nick Mallett for *The Curse of Fenric*. Of course we couldn't judge the story, but we could judge the decision to hire the man again, based on his previous work. Happily the story turned out well, but nevertheless, I still believe it was a foolhardy risk which the show could hardly afford at the time.

As for the futility of fan protests, I would dearly love to read Kate's assessment of the then fledgling ADWFC's 1975 demonstration, which successfully reversed the ABC's decision to drop DOCTOR WHO after *Revenge of the Cybermen* and launched Australian fandom to boot! She states categorically that Tony's and Steven's comments were not constructive criticism: her opinion as fact again, and one which Michael Grade evidently disagreed with, since he replied to Tony with a letter reprinted on *Data Extract 38*'s wrapper, reading "It is good to receive such constructive comments after the hysteria that greeted the original announcement."

As to the ADWFC's "official" position, Kate ignores Dallas' editorial in *Data Extract 36* which I quote (italics are my own, for emphasis): "After a lot of thought and *particularly no negative reaction* to the...[JNT Must Go!]...stop press on last issue's wrapper, the club's policy...is as follows: *The BBC have stated* that the cancellation/postponement was due to *falling ratings and 'bad' stories* and therefore as *the club wishes to see the show continue*....it must take these points into consideration. If the British public are not watching DOCTOR WHO something must be done to change what they are seeing and the only viable answer the club sees to achieve this change is a change of production crew. *Some people may like what they have seen...but...unless it is changed the show is likely not to continue for much longer.*"

Kate's use of the ADWFC survey results scores something of an own goal, if you stop and think. Take the top ten "Favourite Stories". Five each for Hinchcliffe and JNT. But Philip made only sixteen stories, barely a third of JNT's. If, as Kate would have us believe, they were both equally capable of producing popular stories, the ratio should surely be around 3:1. This sample shows that JNT took eight years to make as many classics as Hinchcliffe managed in three!

Kate would have us believe that the "turnaround" in Australian opinion was due to the cessation of Tony's "propaganda". But a quick look at the names quoted in the respective surveys reveals that, on the whole, it was a completely different group of people each time. I have met several "Howe-ists" who have since withdrawn from fandom for the same reasons Tony did - they ceased to be fans because they didn't like the new direction. That could be a reason for the more recent surveys showing approval — those who approve are the only ones still in the club!

Yes Kate, the quotes you have cited do present a very different image to the dictator clinging onto "his" series. These came from an interview given to the mass-circulation *Doctor Who Magazine*, so doubtless he would have said something he wanted the masses to read! Which "image" is to be believed, then? Surely the one that better fits his actions, and what do we know about those? Since quitting the BBC, he has clung like glue to any WHO related job he could get hold of, most notably the BBC Radio Collection audio tapes. His own private production company submitted a tender bid for the show. You can't blame his bosses for holding him to *these* jobs - since quitting the BBC, he has had no boss but himself! Earlier, there could be any number of reasons why they would not "let him go" — they may not have wanted to risk employing him on another show (no such problems with Hinchcliffe). Or more likely, because it was all working out the way Jonathon Powell wanted - an excuse to axe the series. The aim of Operation Who was not to bag the programme, rather to expose Powell's underhanded tactics to arm his own guns and, *in my belief*, only failed because it was laid to rest prematurely. Had it been kept at the ready a little longer, demanding that a successor be named....

JNT's money management skills are in no question, surely? That's the whole problem - he's an economist, not an artist. Much as I admire Philip Hinchcliffe as a producer, I would not want him operating on me to remove a brain tumour - it's not his field of expertise. Good producers can come from many areas connected with a production; script writers/editors, like Hinchcliffe or Williams, directors like Barry Letts or David Maloney. In the case of a sports programme, they might come from a sporting background, or with a children's educational programme like PLAY SCHOOL, they might be experienced teachers. JNT's background in production accountancy need not have made him a poor choice for the producer's job. The most important criterion, I feel, is to know their own limitations, and to recognise the talents of mother members of the team and utilise them, especially where his own may be deficient. It took JNT until season twenty six to learn to leave the scripts to Cartmel, and by then it was too late.

Kate may not like the Pertwee stories, and she makes a perfectly valid point that there is no right or wrong with an individual's preference. The fact remains that Barry Letts inherited "a modestly successful...children's show that had just about run its course" and within five years transformed it into "a legend which looks like going on for ever." (Terrance Dicks). Within JNT's five years, that legend had been reduced to a series kept alive for another four years by the mercy of the BBC bosses, to please a tiny minority of excited fans.

In closing, I would hope that this response will be received as "healthy scepticism" applied to Kate's piece, rather than "slicing her up." In 1985 though the "real issue" was the future of the show, and for people like Tony who had devoted their lives to it, it was a **very** serious one.

David McKinlay
Melbourne, Australia

At the risk of being tedious, can I respond to Kate Orman's article (DWB123) on the opinions of Australian fans? Dallas Jones put his finger on the nub of my objection (in DWB125) but I feel that a couple of points could not remain unchallenged.

Kate attempts to portray JN-T as well regarded in Australia. This is far from certain. She quoted as evidence a survey published by the Sydney based, and expansively titled, Australian DOCTOR WHO Fan Club. However, the most recent survey from the same club (*April '94, published after the article - Ed*) may give a different picture.

The least favourite producer is JN-T, a clear leader with 55 votes. Hinchcliffe fares well with only 4 votes against. The converse poll, for favourite producer, has the two about equal at 50 for JN-T and 51 for Hinchcliffe. But when one subtracts the disliked from the liked the result is remarkably different: JN-T 5, Hinchcliffe 47. Either way one might conclude that JN-T is clearly disliked.

Similarly, JN-T scoops the pool on the least favourite lists. He (or his productions) gets the gong in the categories of directors; seasons (season 24, naturally); musicians; writers; script editors; companions; and producers.

On the positive side favourites in substantial areas were season 14; Robert Holmes (writing and script editor); Dudley Simpson; and Graeme Harper. For a producer who was at the helm for 1/3 of the series' history it is a middling to poor performance if he or his productions are supposed to be so well regarded. No doubt some other interpretation of these figures may be advanced but I believe they speak eloquently enough.

To head off criticisms of bias - yes, I do enjoy much of the JN-T period, but other parts leave me sad to see how an entertaining SF drama was reduced to a comic run-around in its last three or four seasons.

Kate's complementary piece on the seventh Doctor in the anniversary issue was amusing, until I realised she was serious. The article read as if the perceived attributes of those three seasons were in the programme for the first time! Fascist analogy in *Silver Nemesis* (anyone seen a Dalek story or *The Macra Terror*?); Political parody (I recall *Sun Makers* at this point); the Doctor's outrage at war in *Battlefield* (see also *Silurians* or *the War Games*), and so on.

The greatest wheeze was about the seventh Doctor's stories being adult and of the real world. Kate, if you want an adult story with reality see how it's done properly in say, most of seasons one or seven, to pick but two examples.

I would agree that a few of the last dozen stories were decent pieces of work but for the most part I found they were "silly running around knees bent fashion" to borrow from MONTY PYTHON. The results of the poll mentioned above would suggest that this is a common view in Australia. *Silver Nemesis* is a good example of the MONTY PYTHON factor. Hardly an adult story as is suggested. Rather, it attempts to attract a younger audience, giving it lots of colour and movement to hold the interest. Not for this era the dreary old matters of characterisation, plot, or dialogue.

One mark of 'adult' is a comprehension of subtlety and sophistication. It is difficult to argue that these are present in any quantity in seasons 24 or 25. Only in season 26 do we return to something more substantial with the likes of *Ghost Light*. By then, of course, it was too late. Too late because few were interested in a Doctor who could sanction genocide even against the Daleks, or who enigmatically knows everything and waits for all the pieces to drop into place. Comic book style vigilantes are ill-suited to DOCTOR WHO. If the McCoy era was about the real world then I'll believe *The Wizard of Oz* was a documentary about the effects of freak weather conditions in Kansas.

Classifieds

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Michael Briant
London
Many congratulations on your DWB book, *The DWB Interview File.*

I found it a fascinating and most enjoyable read and think you have done a wonderful job on the re-editing of the interviews. They flow splendidly and read as very informative articles which took me on a delightful trip down memory lane.

I am sure the book is going to sell to every fan both here and in the States. Best of luck with future projects.

THANK YOU AMBLIN

Richard Jordan
Northampton
I cannot believe the attitude fans of DOCTOR WHO have taken to the news that Steven Spielberg's Amblin company is set to produce a new series of the programme.

Steven Spielberg who has won the best picture Oscar for his stunning *Schindler's List* - Steven Spielberg who has just thrilled audiences world-wide with *Jurassic Park* - Steven Spielberg who made the world cry with the story of *ET*.

Let's examine the facts. The BBC aren't going to bring DOCTOR WHO back on their own. Can anyone realistically think of anyone they would rather have at the helm of a new series than Spielberg?

I am old enough to remember the earliest days of the series and can honestly say I have enjoyed all the many eras the programme has enjoyed. I can also say I want the show back on our screens. I don't want it back as a shabby, creaky series which youngsters of today will poke fun at though. Kids today are used to state of the art special effects. All this tosh fans talk about the creaky sets being part of the appeal of the show is rubbish. When it first hooked me when I was two and Billy Hartnell was meeting the Daleks for the first time, it was real, and to attract new young viewers its got to be real again.

So come on , for god's sake stop criticising something you haven't seen yet. Get behind the new-look show, for once let's all of us, as fans of DOCTOR WHO look forward with relish to the prospect of a new, refreshed series. Lets stop moaning, the BBC aren't interested in our opinions — they want a show that will appeal to millions of people, not a few thousand.

I say thanks to Steven Spielberg and Amblin for showing interest in the show.

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WAIT FOR THE FACTS!

Mark Taylor
Sunderland
May I attempt to dampen the flames of collective fan hysteria regarding the proposed new series of DOCTOR WHO? DWB can be regarded as one of the architects of this over-excitement. What proportion of your lead news articles (DWB125) can be regarded as hard fact, and how much is pure conjecture?

That the deal with Amblin has been signed seems certain, but surely Ridley Scott's involvement is less so? You seem to feel Richard O'Brien's casting is also a certainty, and raise the hopes of fans with a projected release date for yet another DOCTOR WHO film project. Why not stick to reporting what you know to be true, and have speculation clearly labelled as such? DWB does shape fan opinion - it therefore has a responsibility not to mislead its readership into believing rumour mixed in with fact, with both presented as valid news.

The recent reports have obviously stoked up the fire of a portion of your readership, to the extent that campaigns have been launched with the purpose of altering or even derailing the Amblin deal. Why? Not one of us has any idea of the style, format or worth of the proposed series, and to dictate to Amblin how the programme is to be shaped is both arrogant and presumptuous. For example, why must the series have 26 episodes per year? Why must the series be produced in Britain - xenophobia? Why can only production stalwarts from the Sixties and Seventies produce the show - is no-one else capable? Fans are only a small minority of the total viewing audience. We can't therefore have the programme made solely to our designs.

The main point is, at the moment we only know that Spielberg is interested in making the DOCTOR WHO series. We know nothing else for certain. Why not wait until something has been finally decided before beginning speculation and criticism.

Ed: I have to take issue with you Mark, at base over two points. The first is simply that I think you over-estimate DWB's importance! Past events, and more particularly past campaigns, have shown that DWB's influence on its readership is distinctly limited — in effect, they can be lead only where they want to go! I find it difficult to believe that the various fan campaigns — anti-Amblin Fan's Charter, Who-UK, Whovians for McCoy and Aldred — have been provoked by DWB. In fact, all three of these are responses to Amblin's purchase of the WHO rights — one of the hard facts you suggest we stick to reporting! (and you might note that I shared your scepticism regarding the campaigns in my comment in DWB125)

Secondly, to make a black and white distinction between hard fact and pure conjecture is simplistic. It might well be better to wait until everything has been decided and announced. That certainly is the approach DOCTOR WHO Magazine takes (and has to take) — to report only the definite, confirmed facts. Unfortunately, these are currently few and far between. And fandom is unwilling to wait. DWB could refuse to report the possibilities — but this wouldn't stop the rumours. Gossip travels faster even than light! Glance at the Net DOCTOR WHO topic, at the tabloids... and you'll see that Alan Rickman's name was in circulation long before this issue of DWB hit the streets. DWB cannot stop the rumours. What it can do is provide some means of sorting the wheat from the chaff - dividing those apparently without any foundation (David Hasselhoff?) from those based, to whatever degree, in fact. And hopefully, such an approach will complement the "Nothing but the facts, ma'am" approach of DWM, allowing fandom to draw its own conclusions.

Every DWB report on the future of DOCTOR WHO has foundation. Not vague rumour — but information from someone at the BBC, at Amblin, at wherever is appropriate. In the absence of an official statement, such comments are frequently made on 'lobby terms' - "Don't mention me, but..." Of course, that means we can be taken in by pranksters, and by people who've misinterpreted the comments of colleagues — but we avoid relying on a single source whenever possible. And we undoubtedly hear about plans 'as they stand', which may already be outdated and abandoned by the time DWB sees print. But the alternative is to wait until the decisions are signed and sealed — and as I said above, much of fandom is unwilling to do this.

Occasionally, speculation enters into a report. Informed speculation. The WHO film being a case in point. The film had to enter production by a certain date if it was to be made at all. Which implied dates for completion. Which in turn implied a date for release - the film industry traditionally aiming 'family' films at the Summer, Christmas or Easter markets — unless the film was left to rot on the shelf... And this ***is*** *clearly labelled — reread the news pages of DWB125, and you should find a liberal use of the words "suggest"..."likely"..."expected" distinguishing the possible from the definite.*

But ultimately, of course, it all comes down to a matter of judgement — what to run, and what not. And there I have to defer to our News and Executive Editor, Gary Leigh ...who ***has*** *been doing it for quite a while now!*

Stuart Unitt
Birmingham
Michael Crawford? Richard O'Brien? Dudley Moore? Jools Holland? Alan Rickman? Tom Cruise? DAVID HASSELHOFF??!?? COULD SOMEBODY PLEASE EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON?!?

In the last six months or so, I've read that many different reports of who is going to portray DOCTOR WHO when Spielberg relaunches the programme that I feel like my brain's slipped into a strange dark void that even everyone's favourite Time Lord couldn't rescue it from! Will someone in the know (either at the BBC or Amblin Entertainment) PLEASE put myself and countless other loyal DOCTOR WHO fans out of our misery and announce who's the newest incarnation of your friendly neighbourhood Gallifreyan!!! The waiting's killing me!

Since I've started reading your magazine regularly (I picked up your 30th Anniversary Retrospective issue and from then on I was hooked!) I have to admit I've been impressed by your continued coverage of the ongoing (or even as I type, concluded!) negotiations between the BBC and Amblin.

Anyway, for what it's worth, here are a few suggestions of my own for the -role, taking into account the criteria that the actor in question has to be both British and well known in the United States:-

1) David McCallum. Why not? He's well versed in sci-fi/fantasy roles on the telly such as THE MAN FROM UNCLE and SAPPHIRE & STEEL (we'll forgive him for THE INVISIBLE MAN in the 70's - it must have been a lean decade for good roles for blond haired British actors in Hollywood!). Besides, he looks right for the part!!!

2) David Warner. He's given fine performances in *Time After Time, Time Bandits, Star Trek V* (he didn't write the script!) and *Star Trek VI* - he must surely be a contender?

3) Ian Holm. Very well known on both sides of the Atlantic thanks to films like *Alien* and *Greystoke* and he always turns in a good performance. But would he WANT the part?

4) Charles Dance. Would be well suited to playing the Doctor as a suave sophisticate ala Pertwee. Known to US audiences through his appearances in *The Golden Child* and *Alien 3*.

5) Roy Dotrice. A good character actor and he's about the right age. People will have forgotten about BEAUTY AND THE BEAST by now, surely?

Well, there's a few to mull over. Judging from all I've read recently it looks like Richard O'Brien is tipped to get the part — or is it Michael Crawford? Oh, I give up! As long as David Hasselhoff is out of the running, I wouldn't even object if they offered the part to Mr Blobby! No, sorry, forget I said that! I had the misfortune to catch David Hasselhoff's performance on THIS IS YOUR LIFE the other week and suffice to say, it did little to convince me he is a serious actor.

On to other things...I enjoyed the article about *Star Trek VII* in your latest issue. Sounds like it could be fun....well, if your name's not James T Kirk, I suppose! Hey, if William Shatner finds himself unemployed after the film's completed, maybe he could be persuaded to take over the TARD....no, perhaps not! If only Patrick Stewart hadn't taken on the role of Picard, he might have made an excellent DOCTOR WHO! After all, he and Richard O'Brien share similar hairstyles.

Going back to DOCTOR WHO - the question I must ask is, is the new Amblin series to follow on directly from the last Sylvester McCoy season, or are they intending to 'start from scratch'? Nobody seems to know, or so it seems! Enough rambling, I await with eager anticipation further news and views on the outcome of all these UK/US negotiations and will continue to keep myself updated through the columns of your esteemed publication. Keep up the good work!!!

HAND *of* OMEGA

The Doctor Who Newsletter

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Some Notes on Style

Kenny Smith and Alistair McGown outline the development of THE AVENGERS, from its beginnings as a pedestrian thriller to its conclusion as the epitomy of the Sixties

The irreplaceable Avenger - Patrick MacNee as John Steed (©Lumiere)

AFTER a lengthy spell of retirement, John Steed & company are back — and why ever not? We could depend on it. Eight years after the filmed episodes' last repeat appearance on British screens, THE AVENGERS have made something of a comeback. Lumiére Pictures have suddenly achieved what former copyright holders Movie Acquisition Corp and their predecessors Weintraub Entertainment never managed and realised, after those years of stalling, that there might be profit in riding the wave of an archive television revival.

Like the great British bus, after such a long gap the video releases and satellite screenings have arrived almost simultaneously. The archive(/old junk!) station Bravo has already screened every Honor Blackman episode under the Timewarp Television banner and are poised to move on to what many consider the best season of the lot — the Diana Rigg colour shows...

In an age when STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, DEEP SPACE NINE, QUANTUM LEAP and SEAQUEST DSV dominate the telefantasy landscape, it is only fair that the most single-mindedly British (or should that be English?) TV show ever is allowed a chance to show them all how it's done. Today, as always, THE AVENGERS is a very necessary triumph over "The tyranny of common sense."

But it wasn't always like that. Sydney Newman's original concept could be described as standard cops-and-robbers 'action' — a vehicle for Ian Hendry which was basically, if not literally, a continuation of POLICE SURGEON, Hendry's previous show. Indeed, after POLICE SURGEON Hendry was considered enough of a TV star to warrant a TV Times front cover in the week of the first episode. Two factors made THE AVENGERS stand out from the 1961 television crowd. One was the title — THE AVENGERS (which at the time seemed a new word in the English language) referred to Dr. David Keel (Hendry) and the enigmatic John Steed (Patrick Macnee) and their efforts to bring to book the killers of Keel's fiance. From the third episode onwards the title became almost defunct! In regard to the way the show developed in later years, THE AVENGERS could be considered one of the most ill-titled shows TV has ever seen.

The other outstanding facet of the series was the playing of John Steed by Patrick Macnee. While Keel was an amateur crimebuster motivated by revenge and a disdain for the criminal element, Steed was seen to be employed by some shadowy government department. Initially, Steed was a man who could never quite be trusted. His cynical, hard-bitten approach influenced the formerly humane manner of Dr. Keel. However, anyone who saw the 1993 repeat of the episode *The Frighteners* from this first season will know that the cruel, gun-toting, occasionally thuggish Steed is far removed from the urbane hero of later years, who dispatched villains with many a merry quip. Further analysis is difficult since *The Frighteners* is the only episode to survive from this first season, and while rumours of copies overseas (of course) abound, seven first season episodes went out live and were never even recorded.

THE major changes that made the second season a big hit with British viewers seem to have come about through a mixture of innovation and good fortune. The casting of a woman to replace Hendry (who had left to become a successful British film actor) was certainly very different in 1962, but that Mrs. Cathy Gale took on a very male role seems only to have occurred because no-one could be bothered to change half a dozen scripts which had been written for Dr. Keel. But Cathy Gale wasn't to be Steed's only new sidekick. This duty was shared, in varying amounts, between Mrs Gale, Venus Smith — the nightclub singer given to impromptu singing — and Dr. Martin King, who was really Dr. Keel by any other name, appearing as he did in some leftover Dr. Keel scripts. Venus appeared in six episodes of the second season and Dr. King in only three, leaving Cathy Gale the lion's share, including the season opener *Mr. Teddy Bear*. Honor Blackman became easily the most popular of the three. Television had never seen anything quite like Cathy before, and the judo moves, leather gear and kinky boots all passed into legend. The jovial, flirting relationship that developed between Steed and Cathy was one of the series' big draws, and has influenced a whole series of 'will-they-won't-they' screen partnerships. In any other series up to this time such a relationship would eventually have a pay-off with the characters 'getting it on,' but here THE AVENGERS was different.

The show of this time was most definitely not science fiction, and indeed it never was (if science fiction is defined as a literary extrapolation of the current society), and the outrageous fantasy elements which dominated from Season Four onwards were very rarely in evidence in Season Two. The story with the honour of having the first fantasy base is probably *The Big Thinker*, in which a professor is found frozen stiff inside the largest and most advanced computer ever built. The computer is used at the story's resolve, in order to send an SOS to Steed.

Warlock may have contained a trace of black magic, and *The Golden Eggs* a deadly virus, but otherwise tales of espionage, secret files and murder were the norm. Despite this diet of script ideas THE AVENGERS was very different to what else was on TV at the time. TV was concerned with presenting 'realism' in shows like CORONATION STREET and Z-CARS, and 'fantasy' was largely the preserve of children's television such as TARGET LUNA and Anderson's puppet juvenalia — essentially Westerns with ray guns and rocket ships. Inspector Barlow was an ordinary bloke, and allowing for television staginess was just like the man in the street. As Kingsley Amis put it in 1965, Steed's interest in clothes (for example) was an appealing 'significant irrelevance'. THE AVENGERS introduced fantasy to the ordinary. There were no silver aliens, but the settings and characters could hardly be found in the next street either. It's possible that THE AVENGERS introduced tongue in cheek to television. FIREBALL XL5 might look like high camp now, but that certainly wasn't intentional at the time.

A1	Hot Snow	B1	Mr Teddy Bear	C1	Brief for Murder
2	Brought to Book	2	Propellant 23	2	The Undertakers
3	Square Root of Evil	3	The Decapod	3	The Man With Two Shadows
4	Nightmare 5	4	Bullseye	4	The Nutshell
5	Crescent Moon	5	Mission to Montreal	5	Death of a Bat Man
6	Girl on the Trapeze	6	The Removal Men	6	November Five
7	Diamond Cut Diamond	7	The Mauritius Penny	7	The Gilded Cage
8	The Radio Actiee Man	8	Death of a Great Dane	8	Second Sight
9	Ashes of Roses	9	The Sell Out	9	The Medicine Man
10	Hunt the Man Down	10	Death on the Rocks	10	The Grandeur That Was Rome
11	Please Don't Feed the Animals	11	Traitor in Zebra	11	The Golden Fleece
12	Dance with Death	12	The Big Thinker	12	Don't Look Behind You
13	One for the Mortuary	13	Death Despatch	13	Death a La Carte
14	The Springers	14	Dead on Course	14	Dressed to Kill
15	The Frighteners	15	Intercrime	15	The White Elephant
16	The Yellow Needle	16	Immortal Clay	16	The Little Wonders
17	Death on the Slipway	17	Box of Tricks	17	The Wringer
18	Double Danger	18	Warlock	18	Mandrake
19	Toy Trap	19	The Golden Eggs	19	The Secret's Broker
20	The Tunnel of Fear	20	School for Traitors	20	The Trojan Horse
21	The Far Distant Dead	21	The White Dwarf	21	Build a Better Mousetrap
22	Kill the King	22	Man in the Mirror	22	The Outside In Man
23	Dead of Winter	23	Conspiracy of Silence	23	The Charmers
24	The Deadly Air	24	A Chorus of Frogs	24	Concerto
25	A Change of Bait	25	Six Hands Across a Table	25	Esprit de Corpse
26	Dragonsfield	26	Killer Whale	26	Lobster Quadrille

Multiple Avengers by the shores of Castle De Ath (©Lumiere)

THE AVENGERS played drama for laughs, larger than life. These thrillers were set against unusual backgrounds, such as a magic show or the circus rather than in (backlots disguised as) exotic countries. The show — and the Macnee and Blackman double act in particular — was a big hit with viewers (this season had a larger potential audience to the show: Scottish viewers couldn't receive the first season).

Of course, Season Two demonstrated the limitations of any (predominantly) studio bound production of the early '60s: a title sequence of static, bleached-out photos to suit the 405-line system of TV transmission; slow-moving wordy scenes (used since the show was being taped, wherever possible, in three unbroken segments); small sets; minor mistakes retained with a minimum of reshoots; and a lack of music. Season Two featured stock records played live into the soundtrack or some ramshackle 'arrangements' from British jazz-man Johnny Dankworth. The stock music was far better, and sounds a lot like the creepy oboe material heard in DOCTOR WHO's *An Unearthly Child* . Listen carefully before the second ad-break in *Warlock* and you'll hear the theme record being cued twice! Johnny Dankworth's Season One theme had been retained, and while providing a catchy opener was perhaps a bit too smoky and sleazy for THE AVENGERS.

Season Three tried to supersede the boundaries imposed upon it, and a change in emphasis meant an increase in the fantasy quotient and a more tongue-in-cheek style of playing. The incidental characters became more eccentric and exaggerated, and Steed and Cathy's conversations less naturalistic. It was in this season that THE AVENGERS began to find its visual style. Sets and dressings, such as St John's office in *November Five* or Macrombie's surgery in *Mandrake*, were quite obviously not real, but so long as they looked brilliant on screen that was OK.

The script's settings and plots were becoming more whimsical and comical. It is important to note that a writer by the name of Brian Clemens (a TELLY ADDICTS question recently credited him as creator!) provided six episodes for this season (as well as doing an uncredited rewrite on *Lobster Quadrille*). Amongst these, *Brief for Murder* featured a yoga school; *Dressed to Kill* was set amongst a New Year's fancy dress party on board a train; *Build a Better Mousetrap* featured a long range jamming device seemingly operated by a motorcycle gang.

Clemens was also responsible for what are probably the outstanding two episodes in this season. *Don't Look Behind You* was a brilliant mystery story shot on sets that belied the videotape production techniques. Using only three characters in addition to Steed and Gale gave it an eerie quality that THE AVENGERS had never previously tried to acquire. While *Don't Look Behind You* accentuated the dramatic element of THE AVENGERS, *The Charmers* went to the other extreme and played up the comedy. A deliciously camp performance by Fenella Fielding laid the ground rules for many guest performers in the years to come. Stalwarts such as John Laurie, Leonard Rossiter and Frederick Jaeger had also made a significant contribution in that respect.

No matter how much the scripting and playing improved, they were both let down by a lack of pace and finesse. For example, the generally very good *Death of a Great Dane* is marred when a joke gun that should open into a flag marked BANG! stays resolutely shut until after the event. In the excellent *Mandrake* a jar is smashed against a wastebin only to remain in one piece! For the show to develop its 'visual style', there was only one solution — a changeover from videotape to film. *The Undertakers* had benefited greatly from having its climactic gunfight being filmed in an unusual location, amid gigantic statues. Location filming had appeared as early as the first episode, but such excursions were still few and far between and lacked a proper soundtrack (sound effects and stock music — which usually amounted to an extended drum roll — would later be added to the silent film). A switch to film would allow THE AVENGERS to fulfil its true potential — and make its mark internationally — and from November 1964, THE AVENGERS and its new production team (Telemen) found a home at the Associated British studios at Elstree. The appointment of a new team must have left a few disgruntled people at ABC Rediffusion. Former-producer John Bryce and his crew would take no further part in the series (until the 'coup' of 1967...).

Three men had full control over the series: Associate Producer Brian Clemens would be responsible for the show's new direction; Producer Julian Wintle would be responsible for ensuring it reached the screen; and Albert Fennell — who received the bizarre credit "In charge of production" — lent his expertise in film to give the show its new gloss. Honor Blackman, who of course left at the end of the videotape era, would later say in retrospect that: "The scripts had started leaving the ground a bit." But that was the whole point, and the best was yet to come.

HOWEVER, the change in direction took a wrong turn almost immediately. Even before casting began, the team had a big enough problem trying to find a name for Mrs. Gale's replacement! First it was Samantha, then Mantha, and finally, thankfully, Emma Peel, courtesy not of Clemens, but of the series' press officer Marie Donaldson who realised that the character should have M(an)-Appeal, inspired by the slogan of a stock cube advert!

The next mistake the team made was in casting RSC actress Elizabeth Shepherd to play Emma. It wasn't until the rushes for *The Town of No Return* (the first story filmed) were viewed that the decision to fire her was made. Brian Clemens remembers also that her husband had "an attitude problem" and was taking her scripts home every night to rewrite them! That she had: "absolutely no sense of humour" (as Clemens recalls) didn't help either. In casting Shepherd, the producers could be seen to be playing safe. She was physically similar to Honor Blackman, looking slightly elder than her 26 years. In fact, her look is definitely not 'swinging Sixties' at all, and might not have a-peeled to the youth audience in the way that Emma eventually would. Her red leather fighting gear with single black leather glove seems a bit gimmicky and also rather bewildering — who's going to know red from grey, on black and white TV?

The reserve list was then narrowed down to either Moira Redman or a virtual unknown called Diana Rigg. Clemens wanted Redman but the group decided on Rigg.

Diana Rigg thought her shoulders were too broad, her hips too wide, her bum too big and her bust too small. But the audience seemed to find her perfectly acceptable! As Clemens would later realise, she was someone: "that the women identified with. They were also fascinated to see what clothes she was wearing that week." She was also a woman: "that all the men wanted to take to bed". Perhaps S-Appeal would have been more appropriate!

Even before transmission it was obvious that this season of THE AVENGERS was going to be very different, not only to its predecessor, but to much of TV at the time. An ABC trailer by John Stamp was aired before the season began and featured much of the then-trendy op-art influence which became THE AVENGERS' hallmark. It featured many symbols that would frequently reappear over the years: the bowler hat, the target, the gun, the carnation, the moving crosshairs and the little cardboard figure with the heart motif. The final shot of the sequence said it all: "THE AVENGERS ARE BACK."

And so they were. Saturday, 2nd October 1965, saw ABC broadcast *The Town of No Return* (a mere nineteen months after *Lobster Quadrille* had closed Season Three!) in the London region. The show had stepped up to a different gear. Just comparing the number of quick cuts to those in the titles the previous year bears this out. The new opening credits were more reminiscent of a 1965 fashion shoot than a thriller series and were accompanied by a new theme from Laurie Johnson (well it was new to THE AVENGERS anyway. A slightly different arrangement of the track had been recorded earlier in the year by the Laurie Johnson Orchestra under the title 'The Shake' and indeed appeared on one of their albums, 'The Big New Band Sound Strikes Back Again'). It contained just the right amount of flourish and light-hearted swing to complement the series' new style. Luckily, Johnson was on hand to provide a new score of incidental music, too, though unfortunately some pieces did get a bit over-used (especially that 'mysterious' one!).

The season's stories took place in an olde worlde England that may or may not have existed: fox hunts; the golf club; a university where all wear gowns; a man living in an Age of Steam, all provided the backdrop into which Steed and Emma would appear

D1 The Town of No Return
2 The Gravediggers
3 The Cybernauts
4 Death at Bargain Prices
5 Castle De'Ath
6 The Masterminds
7 The Murder Market
8 A Surfeit of H20
9 The Hour That Ever Was
10 Dial a Deadly Number
11 Man Eater of Surrey Green
12 Two's a Crowd
13 Too Many Christmas Trees
14 Silent Dust
15 Room Without a View
16 Small Game for Big Hunters
17 The Girl from Auntie
18 The Thirteenth Hole
19 The Quick-Quick-Slow Death
20 The Dangermakers
21 A Touch of Brimstone
22 What the Butler Saw
23 The House That Jack Built
24 A Sense of History
25 How to Succeed...at Murder
26 Honey for the Prince

with their thrusting modernism, contrasting with the upper class mannerisms of the other characters. The end of the Empire is reflected in almost every story this season. Kane (in *Death at Bargain Prices*) resents that everything has to be faster nowadays and sneers that this is called "progress". Similarly characters like Winslip in *The Gravediggers* and Rawlings in *Small Game for Big Hunters* have retreated into their own little worlds. In *Castle De'ath* Mrs Peel claims to represent ABORCASHATA, an organisation who see castles and stately homes as tourist attractions, again meaning a reduced and trivialised role for the gentry.

The olde worlde charm was always counterpointed by THE AVENGERS' modern streak (which is often described, perhaps wrongly, as 'science fiction'). Thus miniature submarines hide underneath a Scottish castle, and highly-advanced miniature antennae protrude from the quiet of a graveyard). Only on a couple of occasions this season was it allowed to take over. *The Cybernauts* and *The Man-Eater of Surrey Green* were the exception, rather than the rule. Indeed, the protagonists of *Man-Eater* are the only true 'space aliens' ever to appear in THE AVENGERS.

Though the settings, characters and situations might have been crazy, the stories largely adhered to the formula of the previous season: Steed and Emma would take up 'temporary employment' so as to spy on the suspected baddies. They would then meet up at various points to discuss events, but suddenly Mrs Peel is found out by her sinister employers (perhaps she should have used a pseudonym), and it's up to Steed to rescue her in the nick of time. Once released, Steed and Mrs Peel proceed to beat up the baddies. Of course, that THE AVENGERS had the audacity to use such a silly formula and to do it with such style is perhaps the whole point. Basically, they were turning hokum into an art form.

Indeed copies of AVENGERS episodes reside in the British Film Institute's library of 'notable' recordings (the BFI list very few telerecordings). The impressive visuals for *The House that Jack Built*, for example, brought it into the 'artistically important' category, and were slightly reminiscent of Polanski's *Repulsion*, released around the same time.

Many stories this season could be considered notable by any standards: *What the Butler Saw* and its satire of the British Military, with Steed disguised as officers of the Navy, Army and Air Force (Red, White and Blue!) complete with suitably silly facial hair; *The Quick-Quick-Slow-Death* for taking the show to new and ridiculous heights; the typical 60's runaround *The Girl from Auntie* giving *A Hard Day's Night* a run for its money, with guest performers Liz Frazer (as dippy Georgie Price-Jones) and Bernard '2150 AD' Cribbins; and *A Touch of Brimstone* for bringing whips and kinky capers to British TV viewers, creating THE AVENGERS/bondage tie-in.

THE AVENGERS' Saturday night popularity was consolidated in this season, and Diana Rigg had become even more popular than Honor Blackman. Rigg's more feminine portrayal gave her a more romantic, soft side, that gave an extra edge to her ferocious-cat fight scenes. The leather cat-suits, for which THE AVENGERS are famous, were actually on the way out this season. A false start with Jean Muir as designer left Mrs Peel in some dowdy suits, but John Bates' op-art outfits took the screens — and the shops — by storm.

Of course, Diana Rigg was only half of a great partnership. Emma and Steed continued the flirting that had existed between Cathy and Steed. The duo disappeared (romantically?) into the sunset at the end of each episode, but whether it was into each other's beds, none of us knew.

Those little end scenes, involving various forms of transport, were one of the idiosyncratic AVENGERS touches. Also, each episode began with a (kind of) witty two-line subtitle, and the ABC ad-breaks featured a specially created caption card. The cards were almost always based on a six-square grid that lent itself to a window design for *Room Without a View* or a tied-up parcel for *Too Many Christmas Trees*. One of the cleverest of these was for *Dial a Deadly Number* — photos of Steed and Emma inside the dial of a telephone, either side of a hole that read 'ABC2'. Others featured the target motif quite heavily.

By the close of the season, THE AVENGERS was now a confident and fully-formed product. It was difficult to say where it could go from here, but the answer came with the pre-selling of Season Four to America. Season Four began its transmission in the States on March 21st 1966, five days after *Honey for the Prince* had closed the season's run in Britain. American money meant that THE AVENGERS could now afford to go into colour production, providing a whole new set of boundaries to break. The addition of colour finally completed THE AVENGERS jigsaw. Everything was in place, including a mischievous attitude on the part of the production team.

SEASON FIVE began with *From Venus with Love*: Steed sat an eye test in which he had to identify 10 kinds of hat; Jeremy Lloyd was Bertram Fortescue-Smith, an aristocratic chimney sweep; Jon Pertwee was an army Brigadier recreating his career of bravery on tape; and all of them were threatened by a white light from outer space. Well, actually they weren't — but it certainly looked that way until the final reel. In true AVENGER-style (*Man-Eater of Surrey Green* excepted), a ridiculous premise has an almost rational explanation. *From Venus with Love* was the first in a 16 week run of episodes which were among the finest of idiosyncratic British television. Season Five was broadcast in the UK in two blocks, around a summer break, with the second (beginning 30th September) lasting only eight weeks. This has led to some TV historians referring to the second transmission block as 'Season Six'. Of the first set of episodes none were less than excellent, but such constant brilliance cannot be sustained in a long-running series, and overall the second set failed to live up to the standards of the previous batch.

For the 16 episodes in the first shooting block, the ground rule seems to have been 'there are no ground rules: anything goes'. Certainly the production team must have had a few run-ins with the ABC chiefs and their American backers. THE AVENGERS answer to no-one — they are part of a department, but who they work for is unimportant. All that is required is for Steed to turn up with a card bearing the words "Mrs Peel — We're needed!"

The adventures of Steed and Emma centred largely around all that was groovy — science, big business, automation, comics, and the movies. Some stories set up an incredible premise and gave reasonable conclusions (*The See-Through Man* and the *Escape in Time* were both con-tricks), but *The Cybernauts* really could track down their victims by their heartbeat, domestic tabbies could turn into killers, and mind-swapping was a scientific fact! Though this season took place in a picture-postcard world, populated with English eccentrics, turkey farms and pubs with creaking swing-signs, the satirical edge of season four seemed to have been exhausted, possibly giving the show greater appeal internationally.

Season five attempted things which no-one had done on TV before: in *The Winged Avenger*, comic strip illustrations (by Frank Bellamy) acted as the establishing shots into the closing scenes and when, in *Who's Who???*, the concept of Steed and Emma swapping minds with the enemy agents proved confusing, an announcer's voice explained in a "Special Announcement" what was going on when the episode returned after each ad-break. These announcements have thankfully been retained on the full prints that exist; *Escape in Time* attempted a scene, over ten minutes in length, in which not a word was spoken; in *Epic*, ZZ von Schnerk tells (the tied up) Emma that she will be the posthumous star of his new film 'The Destruction of Emma Peel', which he proclaims to be 'a ZZ von Schnerk Production', at which point a circle of stars and the words A ZZ von Schnerk Production appear on-screen around Emma's head and she gives the appropriate MGM-style roar.

Epic continues further the blurring of reality — is the only reality the fact that we are watching a television programme? In the end tag sequence, the duo are sitting in 'Emma's flat' reading the papers. Steed spots an interesting film in the paper, so the two decide to visit the pictures. Emma gives the wall a push with her foot and it falls down to reveal the film backlot at Associated British. Now, while *Epic* takes place in a studio backlot, and does feature a set that is a copy of Emma's flat, it should be noticed that Emma has changed clothes since the previous scene — so are we watching Emma knocking down the wall of a set, or is she knocking down the fourth wall of television? The previous week, Emma had been watching Season Four's *The Cybernauts* on her television, only to have the programme interrupted by Steed appearing on the screen, in the teaser to *Never, Never Say Die* (anyone who wants to continue this subject further should watch the UFO episode *Mindbender*).

Of course, many of you won't remember seeing that 'teaser' scene, because these, and the 'tag' scenes that appeared just before the end credits, were always the first to be cut for repeat showings, foreign prints, home movie versions and airline screenings(!). The tags and teasers were another example of THE AVENGERS' unique qualities. There were 16 teasers in all, and each featured a novel way for Steed to inform Mrs Peel (and on one occasion vice versa) that their services were required: "Mrs Peel — We're Needed" All were highly original and some were plainly ridiculous — Emma goes to buy a newspaper and finds that the front page headline is "Mrs Peel — We're Needed"; Emma is redecorating her flat and tears down the old wallpaper to discover that Steed has painted the message "Mrs Peel — We're Needed" underneath!

The tag scenes were amusing too, but usually not as nonsensical as the teasers — exceptions being *Dead Man's Treasure* where Emma sets Steed's electric shaver into reverse and instantly grows a

Diana Rigg from the 5th season titles ©Lumiere

E1 From Venus with Love
2 The Fear Merchants
3 Escape in Time
4 The See Through Man
5 The Bird Who Knew Too Much
6 The Winged Avenger
7 The Living Dead
8 The Hidden Tiger
9 The Correct Way to Kill
10 Never, Never Say Die
11 Epic
12 The Superlative Seven
13 A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Station
14 Something Nasty in the Nursery
15 The Joker
16 Who's Who ???
17 The Return of the Cybernauts
18 Death's Door
19 The £50,000 Breakfast
20 Dead Man's Treasure
21 You Have Just Been Murdered
22 The Positive Negative Man
23 Murdersville
24 Mission — Highly Improbable
The Forget-Me-Knot

moustache, and *The Superlative Seven* where Steed goes duck-hunting and shoots a champagne-stuffed teddy bear — and then two intact(!) champagne glasses from the skies. Sadly, the teasers disappeared from the second shooting block, either because they were too silly, because the team had become bored of them, or because the Americans wanted a shorter running time. The episodes in the second shooting block are about four minutes shorter than the preceding 16 — handy if you want to fit in more adverts.

The four month gap in transmission enabled only a seven week break in production, and it's perhaps fair to say that the team's batteries had not fully recharged on returning from their summer hols. *Return of the Cybernauts* featured, unsurprisingly, the return of the Cybernauts, the AVENGERS' arch-enemies (well, as arch as you can get after one appearance), and despite the usual excellent production values and a superb guest role for Peter Cushing, this was only a rehash of their Season Four outing, though, of course, it was an amiable and colourful enough remake. It seemed that Brian Clemens, most of all, was feeling the strain. He had written six episodes of the previous 16, and has always claimed that he heavily re-wrote every other script in the season including those bearing Philip Levene's name. The team seemed to be running out of ideas. In this block of eight, one episode was a remake of an Honor Blackman script, and another (*Mission: **Highly** Improbable*) was a script that had previously been deemed unsuitable for filming. Brian seemed to be running out of quirky ideas: *The Positive-Negative Man* covered familiar ground and *You Have Just Been Murdered* was like an above-average episode of THE SAINT. The playing, dialogue, locations, sets and direction were all first class, of course, but the plots were losing their ridiculous edge.

There were two outstanding stories, however. *Dead Man's Treasure* was a classic piece of plotless nonsense based around a car rally. It had it all: groovy music, groovy cars, groovy locations (Swingingdale indeed) and short skirts — we mean short cuts! *Murdersville* was a real oddity for THE AVENGERS — but it worked. All set within a lovely English village in the sunshine, this one was played almost straight, until Mrs Peel attempts to secretly warn Steed of impending danger, by telephone. She refers to him as her husband and asks him to "kiss Julian, Albert, Gordon and baby Brian". Any ideas where the names came from? The whole thing ends in a custard pie fight with Mrs Peel struggling to get out of her chastity belt.

Season Five ended on 18th November 1967, with the whole season fitting within one year. The series had been a great success in many countries, especially (and most importantly) in America. That year's Emmy Awards saw THE AVENGERS nominated in the Outstanding Drama Series category (alongside I SPY, RUN FOR YOUR LIFE, STAR TREK and MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE), while Diana Rigg was nominated for Outstanding Continued Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Dramatic Series (as was Barbara Bain from MISSION IMPOSSIBLE and Barbara Stanwyck from ABC's THE BIG VALLEY). Sadly, MISSION: IMPOSSBLE won both categories, for reasons known only to the American judges! They must have just loved SPACE:1999!

THERE NOW followed quite an upheaval behind the scenes. Firstly, after being bound, gagged or handcuffed in 22 out of 50 episodes, Diana Rigg decided she was leaving — after finding the constant filming too demanding. Could THE AVENGERS be the same without her. Could it even survive without her?

Even more worrying were the rumblings coming from the studio bosses at ABC (soon to become Thames). What actually went on is hard to fathom, but it appears that Albert Fennell and Brian Clemens were fired from the programme. ABC felt that THE AVENGERS was not only becoming too silly, but also too expensive to produce. They thought that by hiring John Bryce as a replacement, both of these problems would disappear. According to Brian Clemens, within a few weeks of Bryce's installation as producer, he was coming to Clemens begging for scripts, to which Clemens responded: "I can't leave as producer and come back as a writer."

Filming was not going well on Season Six. The new girl wasn't fitting in at all. Steed's new partner was Tara King, played by the young (and inexperienced) Linda Thorson. Linda had been born and raised Linda Robinson in Toronto, Canada, and had moved to Britain in 1965 where she gained her Honours Diploma at RADA. She certainly seemed to have all the right qualifications for an AVENGERS girl — she was overweight, 20 years old, couldn't drive, and had not developed the right sense of humour!

Bryce was soon out of the show. The reasons why are still shrouded in mystery and asking the people involved, after more than twenty five years will only produce vague (and biased) answers. Whether he jumped or was pushed still remains a mystery, but ABC now desperately needed a production team and decided to chase Brian Clemens, who was on holiday in Wales at the time. Through considered choice or through desperation a new team was in place by December 1967. The first moves made by this team were to halt filming on episodes currently in production and view those completed. They decided that they were awful. Their second move was to phone up Diana Rigg!

Clemens wanted to film a proper introductory story for Tara King, and realised that Diana Rigg was under contract to do another episode (in fact, it could be possible that she still owes one episode, as season five was only 24 episodes long — not 26). With Rigg agreeing to return for this one story, Clemens set about writing the script for *The Forget-Me-Knot*, apparently basing it around an episode previously abandoned after some shooting had been done. Indeed, he claims to have written it in three days, so that shooting could begin the following day.

One thing Clemens didn't write was the farewell scene between Steed and Emma at the end of this story. Rigg and Macnee wrote that particular scene themselves and after that tear-jerker it was down to business proper. Emma drove out of Stable Mews with her long-lost husband, and Diana Rigg went back to Shakespeare. Linda Thorson was the AVENGERS girl now. She was under contract, pre-sold to the Americans, and she was staying. Clemens effort in damage limitation involved hiring Patrick Newell (previously a guest twice in THE AVENGERS) to play Steed's boss, the jovial Mother, since he felt Linda Thorson was never going to be able to inject any comedy into the show. Thankfully, she would do much to prove herself worthy during the next year or so.

It seems that the public and fans alike are more interested in Honor Blackman episodes than they are in Season Six. Linda Thorson is the AVENGERS girl who's name no-one remembers. For example, when *Starburst* ran several colour pages on THE AVENGERS in March 1984, they covered season six in the space of two sentences: "In 1967 Linda Thorson replaced Daina Rigg. For the next 30 episodes (sic) she partnered Macnee, as Tara King — the black leather cat suits were gone but the toughness wasn't. In 1969 THE AVENGERS came to an end". Even worse, their episode guide ended, unforgivably, at *The Forget-Me-Knot*. Season Six deserves far more recognition than this.

With *The Forget-Me-Knot* kicking off Season Six, on 12th January 1969 (almost one year after it was completed), *Game* was the first of the new era. And if they had all been this good, then Season Six would have been the best season ever. *Game* was obviously the first story proper of the new era, since it carried the new title sequence. *The Forget-Me-Knot* had seemed rather confused in this respect, opening with the season five Diana Rigg titles and ending with the peculiar set made by John Bryce and his team in 1967 (which were perhaps superior to the sequence more commonly seen in Britain). This sequence was a mix of live action and animation. It opens with the camera scanning a row of animated target figures — a set of crosshairs running over them. Each figure carries a number, creating a countdown sequence "3...2...1": the camera and crosshairs suddenly stop at a figure, on which is painted a large heart shape. At this point, the show's title appears, followed by similar target alleys that introduce the stars — bowler-hatted figures for Patrick Macnee and curvy ones for Linda Thorson. The duo then lark about a large, plain orange set with the crosshairs chasing them across the screen. Shots ring out, and one fires a hole in Steed's bowler.

The end titles continue with Tara's finger beckoning Steed over — her finger is peeking through the hole in his hat. The two look bemusedly at the bowler with the hole, and then they're on the run from their unseen assassin, once more. At one point, Tara pulls out her gold-plated revolver (similar to the one used by Di Rigg in Season Five's opening titles) and uses it

Two eras meet — Diana Rigg & Linda T[illegible]

as a mirror when putting on her lipstick. The titles end with Steed and Tara affecting a set of suitably wacky poses. In all, these titles have a sense of choreography and some kind of narrative which is lacking in the second set.

That Linda Thorson (who was quite possibly wearing a wig!) looks a little overweight and is wearing a slightly frumpy suit seems to have been reason enough to scrap these credits in favour of a re-shoot filmed much later on location at Tyke's Water. The second set of titles, while colourful, are not very different from what else was on offer at the time. The icons (of the gun, the heart, etc.) are largely absent, though the 'playing card' motif is well represented in a quite stylish but rather static end credit sequence.

The Americans and Canadians must have preferred the original set (well, they probably had little say in the matter actually!), and these are retained on the overseas film prints. If you want to see these 'target alley' titles, then get yourself a video copy of Channel 4's repeat of *The Forget-Me-Knot* or, for the full set, *Look Stop Me...*, transmitted by C4 on 21st January 1984.

So, *Game* opened in Britain with that second set of titles (though it's notable that THE AVENGERS was still without a network transmission), and a better opener for the Tara King era couldn't have been chosen. *Game* is a story that exploited completely THE AVENGERS' iconography. Robert Fuest's larger than life photography and outsize board game sets certainly stuck in the memory, and again there are sections of the viewing public who think THE AVENGERS was like this every week.

For Season Six, the motto would appear to be "When it was good, it was very, very good, but when it was bad, it was boring". A big problem was that many stories seemed to be going over old ground, which is perhaps unsurprising in a season of 33 weeks. The best stories then were, by and large, the ones tackling new topics, or those taking liberties and stretching boundaries.

Several stories really played up the humour content: in *False Witness* drinking DreemyKreem milk makes you unable to tell the truth — "I'm not right behind you." In *Love-All*, ministers can't help falling in love with the cleaners and passing on top secret information; *Wish You Were Here* sees Tara trapped in what at first seems a very welcoming hotel. This story demonstrates how much Linda Thorson had improved in the role of Tara. She really had developed quite a sense of comic timing and certainly shows up guest artist Brooke Williams (as Basil). Guest partners were endemic in Season Six. In a thirty-three week season this method of allowing lead actors a week off has to be used. Thus many stories had Steed or Tara invalided out, leaving the other principal paired off with a guest partner, none of whom reprised their roles. Only one was particularly outstanding: Jennifer Croxton's Lady Diana Forbes Blakeney turned *Killer* from a good story into a great one and reminded Diana Rigg's fans what they were missing. Rumours since the show ended have even suggested that Croxton would have replaced Thorson in Season Seven.

Stories such as *Fog*, and particularly *Look (Stop Me If You've Heard This One) But There Were These Two Fellers...* ventured into territory that could not be termed true to life, unless you meet killer clowns every day. Quite why Mother drove around tiny foggy streets in a vintage car, we don't know, but it did look interesting on screen. *Look Stop Me...* was, as perhaps the title suggests, one of the most ridiculous episodes ever and certainly one of the best. There's John Cleese as Pugman, who registers clown make-ups, and paints them on very fragile eggshells, making visitors very unwelcome. There's Merry Maxie Martin, the killer clown, and his classic tree disguise and, of course, don't forget his classic quick-change routine which, bizarrely, Steed manages to pick up too.

Pandora manages to add some psychological drama and mystery to the season, and leaves the viewers feeling as drugged as Tara (she is chloroformed or knocked out eight times in this story). The dramatic visual imagery is a lot harder than the rest of this light-hearted season. *Bizarre*, the story that finished it all off, went out in a riot of colour, and utilised the favourite AVENGERS' plot of a secret underground base, almost as an homage. This story also featured a lot of Sixties bimbos which was a very strange move for THE AVENGERS (see also *All Done With Mirrors*). Strangely enough, though the Avenger girls are usually seen as strong female role models, the rest of the female characters are usually incredibly dippy, or frigid, domineering villainesses.

An ill-advised experiment - Steed comforts a blonde Tara (©Lumiere)

The opening scene to *Bizarre* sums up THE AVENGERS attitude. A young woman stumbling dazedly through the countryside in a nightgown — that the countryside is covered in snow is the important part, filling the screen with a pale whiteness over which huge red letters can read "BIZARRE".

In these stories, it's obvious that the production team were still pushing whatever boundaries were trying to hold them in (which must have proved an anathema to the ABC bosses who hoped for a 'sensible' show) but in others, a jaded feel was coming through. Even Patrick Macnee felt at the time that the show was becoming tired.

This season is probably not highly regarded due to a few truly dreadful stories. Each has a redeeming scene, location, character or witty one-liner, but turkeys like *Noon-Doomsday*, *Invasion of the Earthmen*, *Homicide and Old Lace*, *The Curious Case of the Countless Clues*, and *The Super Secret Cypher Snatch* really stick in the mind. Season Six featured too many 'typical AVENGERS stories'. In Season Five there had been no formula. However, the tone of this season was never quite right. Though Linda Thorson eventually settled into the role, too much emphasis was placed on 'the organisation' perhaps for the benefit of viewers who needed everything explained to them — but having Steed report to his bosses every week made Steed seem ordinary. How can Steed have a 'superior'? In a way, this was a giant step back to the videotaped days of 'One-Ten'.

Though Patrick Newell's portrayal of wheelchair-bound boss Mother was amiable enough, that Steed had to report to him for lengthy chats really slowed the pace of the episodes. At least Mother didn't sit behind a desk — he could be found floating in the middle of a swimming pool, or sitting on the top deck of a bus. Too much time was spent in offices in Season Six, and a lot of stories featured threats to ministers by rather ordinary villains. Even the locations often looked rather ordinary in season six. Ordinary should not be the operative word for THE AVENGERS

This was of little interest in America — sadly, ABC (American Broadcasting Corporation) ran The Avengers against I DREAM OF JEANNIE and the first half hour of ROWAN AND MARTIN'S LAUGH-IN (on NBC), and with LAUGH-IN the biggest show in America between 1968 and 1970, THE AVENGERS lost out (quite how CBS's GUNSMOKE fared out of its positioning between the two, history does not recall, but it's interesting to wonder what might have happened had NBC run the final season of Star Trek in that slot, as they'd originally planned...).

With ABC 'not requiring' any more episodes, THE AVENGERS had lost its biggest financier. ABC screened *Bizarre* on September 14th 1969, while Thames transmitted that final episode the day after in Britain. It was fitting really that a show that partially defined the Sixties never quite made it intact into the next decade.

1 Game
2 The Super-Secret-Cypher Snatch
3 You'll Catch Your Death
4 Split
5 Whoever Shot Poor George Oblique Stroke XR40?
6 False Witness
7 All Done With Mirrors
8 Legacy of Death
9 Noon Doomsday
10 Look - Stop Me if You've Heard This One — But There Were These Two Fellers...
11 Have Guns.. Will Haggle
12 They Keep Killing Steed
13 The Interrogators
14 The Rotters
15 Invasion of the Earthmen
16 Killer
17 The Morning After
18 The Curious Case of the Countless Clues
19 Wish You Were Here
20 Stay Tuned
21 Take Me to Your Leader
22 Fog
23 Homicide and Old Lace
24 Love All
25 Get-A-Way
26 Thingumajig
27 Pandora
28 Requiem
29 Take Over
30 Who Was That Man I Saw You With?
31 My Wildest Dream
32 Bizarre

OF MACE AND RATS

Tegan (Janet Fielding) encounters the Terileptil leader (Michael Melia) — BBC Video.

THE DOCTOR WHO stories between *Castrovalva* and *The Caves of Androzani* were for the most part remarkable for their failure to resonate the ostensible flavour of the Davison era: that is to say that most of the fifth Doctor's adventures were surprisingly out of character with the original personality of their hero. Davison's Doctor was supposed to exude a vaguely innocent charm, a boyish enthusiasm and shy playfulness: in most of his stories, however, the fifth Doctor's character is neglected by script and direction alike, and can only make itself known through the efforts of Davison's own likeable performance. After the nineteenth season, the storylines themselves lose any sense of that flavour of Davison's era (with the notable and noble exception of *Frontios*), and lapse into a rather jaded cynicism. It is true that, after *Time-flight*, a few episodes do try to recapture that fresh fifth Doctor feel (a cool collation of Alfred Douglas, Luke Skywalker and Rupert Brooke): but the likes of *Mawdryn Undead* and Enlightenment are too stiflingly self-indulgent, while *The King's Demons* and *The Awakening* never quite satisfy. No, if you want an authentic feel-good Davison adventure, you're obliged to return to his first season, way back in '82 (those without a time machine are invited to employ the services of BBC Video): but even then these gems are hardly thick on the ground.

Castrovalva and *Kinda* are the most obvious for this generic canonization: both are splendid examples of the crafting of a narrative around a single, dominant personality (which is what the best DOCTOR WHO does). Of course, *Time-Flight* is much too dull and silly; *Earthshock* is too dull; and *Four to Doomsday* too silly — all three stories are early casualties of the era's (the producer's) increasingly jaded ennui. *Black Orchid*, by contrast, is such a blatant and manipulative synthesis of fresh faced charm and halcyon summers that it verges on the disingenuous. Which only leaves us with *The Visitation*: a much less innocent escapade than Castrovalva, but also a much more naive one. It is the closest thing to a typical Davison story (if such a thing is possible) — so much so that, in an era of generic atypicality, it is virtually unique. Without it (and the inferior Black Orchid), there would be no textural link between *Kinda* and *Earthshock*, and the fifth Doctor's first season would (in narratological terms at least) just fall apart. The otherworldly, fin-de-siecle Englishness of Davison's most charming early adventures proved impossible to sustain: *The Visitation* trumpeted their triumphs, but signalled the retreat. The forces of market economics were beginning to bite at the BBC's heels, and DOCTOR WHO was starting to feel their pragmatic pinch. The successor to the plummy-toned, wavy-haired, long-term lead, and the camp old seventies sailor-boy had arrived — but soon this straight-haired, cricket-loving premier stopped playing Mr Nice Guy and braced himself to be replaced by a fat bloke with a loud voice and a reputed love of beer. (Although Davison doesn't pronounce 'want' to rhyme with 'ant', he knows a boy who does.... But does this mean that the Tory leader after next will be a diminutive whining Scot — Malcolm Rifkind?)

In a recent issue of the satirical multi-media fanzine, *Spot*, Sophie Street condemned *The Visitation* as a thinly veiled rip-off of all of Four to Doomsday's best ideas: 'space opera repeats itself as pseudo-history: for the first time as Bygon's Greek tragedy, for the second time as Richard Mace's farce' She argued that Saward's script had more similarities to Terence Dudley's script than just the beheading cliff-hanger: 'For three green amphibian Urbankans read three green Terileptils; for synthetic ethnic minorities read villagers (both controlled by devices mounted at their wrists); for frogs read rats. The settings are starkly different, but not much else is.'

Ms Street's criticisms are, in my opinion, characteristically awry. What she fails to acknowledge is the fact that *The Visitation* is not simply a set of superficial plot devices: the joy of the story lies in its characters, its dialogue and, in particular, that refreshingly old-fashioned setting. *The Visitation* is, after all, the first DOCTOR WHO story to be set exclusively in the planet Earth's past since *Horror of Fang Rock* four years previously, and its seventeenth century scenery is, of course, crucial in establishing not only *The Visitation*'s storyline but also its unique feel. Along with *The Time Warrior* and *The Masque of Mandragora*, it is one of the very few colour stories which comes anywhere near to exploiting the dramatic potential of its historical backdrop: *Pyramids of Mars* and *Horror of Fang Rock* (fine though they are) could have been set at virtually any time, in any isolated spot, in any corner of a TV studio, without necessitating much severe alteration to their storylines. *The Time Warrior*, on the other hand, is inherently medieval (even Linx subscribes to a medieval mentality); whilst *The Masque of Mandragora* concerns itself directly with the Renaissance's argument between Middle Aged mysticism and modern science; so *The Visitation* draws its story from its setting — a century whose two most famous dates (1665 and 1666) converge to cancel each other out. Much as in historical reality, when the Great Fire of London purged the city of its plague-carrying black rats, so — in Saward's adventure — the legendary conflagration puts a premature halt to the Terileptil leader's poxy plans. The inferno at the end of *Pyramids of Mars* is part of a false or fictive history (or pseudo-history), but here in Pudding Lane, this is the real stuff.

I instinctively draw back from the use of the term 'pseudo-history'. It is an unhelpful conceit of fan jargon which prevents people thinking about what (in generic terms) is really going on. (An issue Pip MacDonald also intends to cover in DWM). There are those who have happily parroted the line that, for instance *The Romans* and *The Gunfighters* are historical stories, while *The Visitation* and *The Time Meddler* are pseudo-histories. They have even gone on to suggest that *Black Orchid* is not a historical, but a pseudo-historical, by dint of its use of a monster-figure (the much- abused George Cranleigh). Of course, these meditations entirely miss the point. Unlike *The Aztecs* (perhaps the programme's only extant pure 'historical' adventure), *The Romans* makes no attempt to portray history as it actually happened: its influences are not historical, but literary and cinematic; if there's a hint of Suetonius about it, then it probably gets that from Robert Graves (in genre terms, it lies somewhere between *I, Claudius* and *Carry on, Cleo*, with a touch of Frankie Howerd thrown in for good measure). *The Gunfighters* is similarly not about the West so much as it is about westerns. Both stories are primarily textual pastiches. *Black Orchid* is not especially interested in the history of the landed gentry in 1920s England (nor is it a fantastical monster story): it's a simplistic pastiche of inter-war detective fiction, most obviously that of Agatha Christie.

Let us therefore avoid burdening *The Visitation* with the label, 'pseudo-history': it is in fact one of those rare DOCTOR WHO stories for whose plots the historical background itself proves absolutely essential. Indeed, in contrast to the roles played by Sutekh and the Rutan, the Terileptils are almost incidental to their story. Like Linx and the Mandragora Helix they merely help push events to extremes. They bias the dialectic, sure; but they are no more than the pawns of historical inevitability. Linx and the Helix represent fores of reactionary medievalism, and when their interference on the side of the argument is balanced by the Doctor's weight on the progressive wing, history can resume its natural course. The tale of the Terileptils is rather cleverer: their efforts to sponsor the plague are met by the Doctor's own (unconscious) encouragement of another great piece of history. In the end, *The Visitation* is not about people in funny clothes running away from monsters with scary faces: ultimately, it is about the way that events interact to invent the phenomenon we call history.

The Visitation is steeped in historical details and echoes; this much is obvious from the start. A family of landed gentryfolk relax after dinner with an arsenal of flintlocks within easy reach: for this is only twenty years after the end of the Civil War (and only six since the restoration of the deposed monarchy), and England's political future still hangs in the balance (indeed only twelve years from now the Glorious Revolution will sweep William and Mary to power). In the night sky above, a shooting star explodes like a firework — this reference will not be lost on the modern viewer who knows that Guy Fawkes had been up to his anarchic tricks only sixty years earlier. When the time-travellers arrive on the scene, the air is heavy with the smoke of burning potassium nitrate and sulphur. So does this portend a second Gunpowder Plot, a new revolution — an assault upon the body politic?

The Visitation & Black Orchid
BBC Video - 4th July

A DOUBLE PLEASURE

This is the realm of history, of those historical minutiae which inform a broader canvas. Whilst still in power, the Puritans had closed the playhouses; and now the magical theatricalities of London's extensive dramatis personae are enacted in the surrounding countryside, where the talk is rife with rumours of highwaymen, witchcraft and grim blokes in cloaks. Michael Robbins's Richard Mace—the story proper's only named contemporary character—is a highway man in the style of his multiple namesake, Richard 'Robin' O'Sullivan's Richard Turpin, a performer and a gallant. He is a tacky relic of pre-revolutionary England, an actor whose very name sounds antithetical to the puritan ideal: he is like that other mace, another showy bauble, the symbol of the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons — a symbol which Oliver Cromwell pointedly (and famously) ordered to be removed.

But what is especially interesting about *The Visitation* — and what leads it towards such stories as *Earthshock*, *Warriors of the Deep*, *Resurrection of the Daleks*, and *The Caves of Androzani* — is its sense of the enslavement of such details, and of individuals, to the greater flow of events. The Doctor and his companions prove virtually impotent before the force of circumstances: the Doctor's victory (such as it is) is more a result of luck than of good judgment. Indeed the most that the ineffectual Time Lord can manage is to precipitate the events that comprise accepted history, and then to endeavour to understand why things happen to have worked out. "I have a sneaking suspicion this fire should be allowed to run its course," he explains. This is not a character who makes things happen (the most he can do is to help things along); it is enough for him to comprehend history, he does not try to change it. What more can anyone do?

Unlike the Doctor's seventh incarnation, his fifth shows no desire to play God. He is an idealist, rather than an ideologue. His charm (his initial naivety) stems from his belief that events and individuals will always turn out right in the end (though they may sometimes need a shove in the right direction). But Davison's later stories undergo a process of disillusionment which reflects the prevailing dog-eat-cat mentality of Eighties Britain. So far, the only old friend Davison's Doctor has watched disintegrate is his sonic screwdriver; but darker tragedies loom. Still, let's enjoy this summer's BBC Video Terileptilfest in the spirit it inspired on original transmission — a feeling that everything will eventually turn out for the best. Always look on the bright side of the Great Fire of London. Every exploding space freighter has a silver (or golden) lining. The Spectrox phial isn't half-empty — it's half full. (8)

Alex Roberts

BLACK ORCHID has always been easy to overlook, sandwiched as it is between *Earthshock* and *The Visitation* (deservedly highly popular at the time if somewhat forgotten recently), and overshadowed by *Castrovalva* and *Kinda* as fans reassessed the season and looked for deeper meanings. So it's appropriate in many ways that it should be bundled with *The Visitation* by BBC Video, without even a separate tape to call its own.

It's not an earth-shattering story. It's not a deep philosophical work, steeped in hidden meanings, and it certainly has no didactic points about fascism and the nature of evil, veiled or overt, to make (well, unless we view it as a Watergate analogy, which suggests that cover-ups always cause more trouble than they seek to conceal! Perhaps BBC Video could slap a sticker on it, and tie it into the Watergate season!). All of which makes it a refreshing diversion for Doctor Who. Instead we have a solid old fashioned country house mystery, the sort of thing that makes a plane trip fly by, in which the Doctor's arrived to take the place of Albert Campion.

Black Orchid is very much the fifth Doctor's story, one into which few other Doctors could have fitted with such ease, as he swings from gleeful enjoyment of the cricket match to a brusque contempt for Lady Cranleigh's attitudes as deeply felt as any of the Seventh Doctor's diatribes against evil. Here the Doctor values a single life, and hates its waste, as deeply as he would those of an entire species. And for that reason he takes pains not to cause unnecessary offence to anyone, however much trouble this may cause him...

During the *Five Faces* repeats a friend commented to me that the (then unseen) Davison team would've managed to escape back to the TARDIS within five minutes of encountering the Tribe of Gum. *Black Orchid* shows the fallacy in this — it's horses for courses. Once caught up in the mores of inter-war Britain, the Doctor and co find themselves dragged along by the need to be polite (though the speed with which the Doctor decides to admit his true origins still seems unconvincing!), unable to escape a childishly simple plot. The poor, mad relative in the attic — that's all there is to it, with all the rest mere window dressing intended to keep it running long enough to play out the set-pieces (each of which is knocked straight across the boundary in accomplished style, though the bright summer feel of *Castrovalva*'s location filming would have put the finishing touch to this portrayal of an idyllic English summer — complete with cocktails on the terrace and the sound of leather against willow...).

As a double story, *Black Orchid* is something of a departure from Doctor Who's established traditions. In the past, they'd generally fallen into two categories — in the first (as first seen in *The Chase*), a brief sequence led up to a confusing fight scene designed to leave the audience unsure who'd survived; while the stories in the second were intended to let the lead actor loose for a week or two, allowing him free reign to enjoy himself as he broke free of the restrictions of the Doctor's character and had some nice, villainous fun with an evil alter-ego (as is witnessed by Patrick Troughton's accentical-athleetics in *The Enemy of the World*, William Hartnell's hard-as-nails performance in *The Massacre*, and Tom Baker's scenery chewing arrogance in *Meglos* — all performances which exaggerate aspects of the Doctor's normal character into something uncomfortable).

Sarah Sutton's task is more mundane, and is more concerned with establishing the credibility of the plot than stealing the scene — she has to keep Nyssa and Ann similar enough to pass as each other convincingly whenever they wish, while still establishing them as distinct and separate people in every other scene. And she does this very well, to the point where it's genuinely obvious which of the 'clones' is endangered at episode one's conclusion — only the thought that this would be *too* obvious a get out keeps the issue in any doubt...

The split screen work is generally convincing, certainly by the standards of the time, and the headdress prevents any need to use CSO on location (perish the thought), though Sarah Sutton's double Vanessa Paine is taller by a good couple of inches (still, it's only one shot which really shows this, though Sarah Sutton once commented that they must have selected her by sticking a pin in *Spotlight* — she's gone from *Spotlight* now...).

In fact, none of the Doctor's companions are really necessary to the plot — Tegan flirts with Sir Robert and dances the Charleston; Adric eats, completing the development of a single line in *State of Decay* into a running joke (and one which makes some scientific sense — Adric's high metabolic rate would require quite some sustenance), and Nyssa demonstrates a rare ability to see the joke. Any of them could have been easily omitted, even the double plot-line merely serving to give the Doctor a personal stake in events otherwise lacking... But that doesn't particularly matter — *Black Orchid* is an enjoyable interlude, not a tightly-plotted nail-biter, and a few well characterised lines allow the companions to shine far better than any amount of running around-ingeniously-escaping-and-getting recaptured would have done. In fact, it's Nyssa who has the fewest interesting moments amongst the companions —but then she's at home amongst the restrained upperclasses, and might be expected to merge quietly into the scenery.

The most disappointing thing about *Black Orchid* is that it proved a one-off. That's surprising really, given JNT's supposed love of costume drama and guest stars, not to mention financial rectitude — to have interspersed three two-part historicals throughout each season would have provided opportunities for all three. Eric Saward might have found his troubles eased if he'd needed only five good, original science fiction stories a year, with some literary pastiches filling out the rest of the season, and with sets and costumes drawn to a large degree from stock the relentless budget pressures which tended to crush at least one story a season underfoot might have been alleviated. But it didn't happen, though the pseudo-historical nature of the subsequent two-parters demonstrates that there was some point to the idea. Perhaps JNT was disappointed that there wasn't greater response to a story he reportedly saw as the showcase of the season, and decided it wasn't worth making another like it. A pity — *Black Orchid* was never the sort of thing to win the season poll, but a few more interludes like it would have made a welcome addition to the doom-laden fare of subsequent years. (8)

Anthony Brown

STAR TREK DEEP SPACE NINE

20)The Maquis, Part I 30th April 1994

TELEPLAY BY JAMES CROCKER; STORY BY RICK BERMAN & MICHAEL PILLER & JERI TAYLOR AND JAMES CROCKER; DIRECTOR JAMES LIVINGSTON; MUSIC JAY CHATTAWAY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR GLENN NEUFELD

With this two-parter the foundations are laid for STAR TREK: VOYAGER, although the groundwork actually began in *Journey's End* on TNG. Avery Brooks takes centre stage for a change but he has a lot of help

A Cardassian freighter seems to make a routine departure from Deep Space 9, but it barely clears the docking ring before it explodes, taking 78 crew members with it. O'Brien and Kira quickly comb through the debris for clues, as Sisko knows that this could mean anything from a renewal of hostilities between Bajor and the Cardassians to the derailing of the new Federation/Cardassian treaty

Bajor goes on alert but there is nothing but silence from the Cardassians. Starfleet is not so reticent. Sisko is bombarded by demands for information from every admiral within subspace range. At first it seems like an unusual accident, but O'Brien finds traces of Federation material and they conclude that a device was attached to the impulse engines which caused the explosion

As he races to prevent a confrontation, Sisko is visited by an old friend. Calvin Hudson has become the Starfleet liaison officer to the former Federation colonies that ended up in the new demilitarised zone separating Federation and Cardassian space. Sisko expects that he and Commander Hudson can work together to preserve the peace, but Hudson's assistant is attacked. The Federation abandoned the colonists and they have no choice but to defend themselves. Sisko points out that several Cardassian colonies in the zone find themselves in the same situation, but Cal says there is no risk for them. The Federation will protect them but the Cardassians will not lift a hand to prevent violence against the Federation colonists.

Still, Hudson insists that the Cardassians have been silent because they are not willing to risk the treaty - which is so advantageous to them - by sending forces into the zone. While the two Starfleet officers argue over the wisdom of the peace process, Quark receives a visit from an unusual customer. A Vulcan woman wishes to discuss a business proposition with him

When Sisko returns to his quarters he discovers he has another visitor. Gul Dukat, the former Commander of the station, has managed to slip aboard unannounced and get into his old suite. He has other surprises. Sisko expects that he has come to deliver threats from the Central Command, but Dukat insists that he has come on his own to enlist Sisko's aid in averting a crisis that would pull the Empire and the Federation back into war

He wants the two of them to take a Runabout so Sisko can find the truth that he already knows - that "morally superior" humans and other members of the Federation are responsible for the destruction of the freighter. He wants Sisko to clean house himself before the Cardassians do it for him. Dukat says they will find what they seek in the Vorlon colonies. Sisko is suspicious but agrees to take a personal look at the situation in the zone.

On their journey the sensors pick up an attack on a Federation merchant vessel by Cardassian colony shuttle ships outfitted with phasers. Gul Dukat orders the ships to disengage after identifying himself, but is ignored. He is prepared to fire on them when a ship outfitted by Federation colonists arrives on the scene first. It appears that the colonists are waging their own little war with or without outside support

Quark is startled to learn that his Vulcan visitor wants to buy quite an extensive list of weapons - and expects to need still more in the future. He tells Sucona that she does not seem to be like other Vulcans. Sisko and Dukat arrive at the colonies in time to witness a heated meeting between Hudson's colonists and the Cardassian representatives. Gul Evek has kidnapped a colonist from DS9 whom he says has confessed to planting a bomb on the freighter. When he returns the man's body, a fight erupts. Sisko restores temporary order but again finds Hudson unwilling to restrain the Federation colonists. He says they are subject to random attacks from the Cardassian colonies and must defend themselves since the Cardassians have no intention of letting them stay

Sisko and Dukat return to DS9 as the situation worsens. Sisko finds out just how bad it is when Dukat is attacked and spirited away from the station during the night. Sisko has O'Brien trace the path of the most likely ship and goes in pursuit as a group in the demilitarised zone calling itself The Maquis takes credit for the kidnapping

Aging action film actor Bernie Casey guests as Cal Hudson, matching Brooks in size and glower. Marc Alaimo gets most of the best lines, however, as he returns as Gul Dukat. Bertila Damas plays the unusual Vulcan and Tony Plana is a bellicose colonist.(7)

21)The Marquis, Part II 7th May 1994

TELEPLAY BY IRA STEVEN BEHR; STORY BY RICK BERMAN & MICHAEL PILLER & JERI TAYLOR AND IRA STEVEN BEHR; DIRECTOR COREY ALLEN; MUSIC DENNIS MCCARTHY; VISUAL EFFECTS SUPERVISOR GARY HUTZEL

If you have not figured out by now who the leader of the terrorists is, shame on you

Sisko, Kira and Bashir follow the warp signature of a suspect ship to an M class planet in the zone. But when they beam down, they are expected. Cal Hudson and some of his followers are waiting for them and Dukat is not there. Hudson has discarded his uniform, but Sisko implores him not to step over the line

Hudson wants Sisko to join them, saying Central Command has stepped over the line by smuggling weapons to the Cardassian colonies. The right thing to do is to help the other colonies fight back. Sisko wants proof that the Cardassians are breaking the treaty by arming their former colonies, but Hudson does not have any yet. They took Dukat because they think they can get information on arms shipments from him

Hudson cannot bring Sisko over to his side but will not harm him. He stuns the Starfleet officers and leaves them. Sisko is already in a bad mood and returns to DS9 to find a Cardassian Legate is on route to see him and Admiral Nacheyev has already arrived to express Federation concern - and to warn him that Cardassian Central Command has gone on alert. In her usual blunt way she also questions whether DS9 security should be left in the hands of this shapeshifter.

Sisko elects not to tell her about Hudson. She reminds him that it is imperative to preserve the treaty. Sisko finally explodes to Kira, telling her that the trouble is Earth. When you look out the window of Starfleet Headquarters you see paradise. There is no poverty, no crime, no war. It is easy to be a saint in Paradise, but out there on the frontier all the problems have not been solved and there are no saints

Odo's contribution to the case consists of rounding up his favourite suspect. He knows that Quark was seen with a Vulcan woman implicated in the Dukat kidnapping. The Ferengi quickly agrees to give evidence and tells them about the weapons Sucona has bought.

The Cardassian Legate arrives with an unexpected message. Instead of making dire threats if Dukat is not rescued, he accuses Dukat of being one of a small group of "misguided" officers who were running weapons to the colonies without the knowledge of Central Command. He tells Sisko not to bother with rescuing Dukat - if the Maquis do not kill him, Central Command would. There will be no retaliation, Cardassia has no desire to go to war again with the Federation

Sisko sends him on his way, now convinced that Central Command has indeed been sending weapons into the zone and has decided to make Dukat a scapegoat. Although Kira would rather leave Dukat to the Maquis, Sisko has O'Brien plot likely locations for a Maquis base and sets out to search for Dukat. Sucona has been trying to mind meld with the Cardassian to get information about weapons shipments from him, but she is unable to join her mind to his. He taunts the Maquis about how superior Cardassians are at extracting information from prisoners. It can be unpleasant and the Federation does not like anything unpleasant. He tells them they lack the commitment to do what is necessary. He is equally indignant that Sisko would rather talk than shoot people when he comes to rescue him

But Sisko has his moment when they return to DS9 with their prisoners. Dukat cannot understand a legal system where the verdict is not known before the trial begins. He claims that the innocent are never accused in the Cardassian system, so Sisko tells him that Central Command has denounced him. Dukat is shocked at first but then says that he knew this was inevitable from the moment that they withdrew from Bajor. Some people thought he should have killed every Bajoran under his control. And for the first time he also believes that Central Command has been smuggling

O'Brien and Kira infiltrate Cardassian territory (The Homecoming — Paramount

weapons without telling him. He agrees to help stop the smuggling if Sisko will help him stop the Maquis...

Why would a 24th Century group on the far frontiers of space adopt an obscure name like The Maquis? What kind of Vulcan is Quark hanging out with? And is this interesting enough to fuel another seven year series? Certainly listening to Hudson and Sisko have the same argument five times was not, but Berman, Piller and Taylor certainly hammered the point that this ain't paradise loud enough to be heard up where Mr.Roddenberry's ashes orbit the planet.

On the plus side, Alaimo has some fine moments as Dukat lectures everyone in sight on how unsaintly you have to be to get taken seriously in his neighbourhood. He is much more effective then Casey endlessly bellowing that the poor colonists have been abandoned and gotta do what they gotta do. On the downside, they do a patented "humanizing" of Dukat to try to make us see Cardassians in another light, just as Quark has been made a romantic kind of guy and Hugh is the warm and fuzzy Borg. It is odd how space aliens can be more human than folks in Bosma.(8)

STAR TREK THE NEXT GENERATION

Captain Picard (Patrick Stewart) - Paralluis ©Paramount

21)**First Born** 30th April 1994

Teleplay by Rene Echevarria; Story by Mark Kalbfeld; Director Jonathan West; Music Dennis McCarthy; Visual Effects Supervisor Michael Backauskas

Still playing games with time, but at least a relative return to sanity is in order with this Klingon saga...and the Klingons sing!

There is tension in the Worf household. Worf wants Alexander to prepare himself for the first Rite of Ascension which amounts to declaring his intention to become a warrior. If he does not do this before the age of thirteen, he will never be able to be a true Klingon warrior. But his son reminds him that his mother said he did not have to do any of that Klingon stuff he did not want to and right now Alexander does not think he wants to be a warrior.

As it happens the ship is having to wait several days to rendezvous with another vessel. Picard is going to use the time to explore some nearby ruins. When he learns about Worf's problem he reminds him that a Klingon festival is about to begin and suggests he take the boy to a Klingon outpost in the area to expose him to more of his heritage.

Alexander is indeed drawn into an operatic street performance of Klingon legend in which Kahless challenges a tyrant to battle. So involved are both father and son that they do not notice they themselves are being watched. As they prepare to beam back to the ship that evening, three men attack Worf. A stranger who seems oddly familiar to Worf comes to his aid. The man wears a ring that shows him to be Kmtar to the house of Mogg. He says that Worf's brother Kurn has sent him.

Riker is concerned about this attack but the Kmtar rudely tells him it is a Klingon matter. Worf insists he explain to the commander. He is a family protector sent by Kurn because of rumours on the home world of an assassination attempt against the house. The attackers left behind a knife which bears a Duras family symbol and Kmtar suggests that they want Kurn's seat on the Council. Riker resolves to find them but Kmtar says that they have disappeared.

When Worf takes his guest to task for being rude to Riker, Kmtar asks if he has forgotten how Klingons behave. Worf has not but he points out that human ways are different. That is something that is much on Kmtar's mind. He wants to know if Alexander is being prepared to lead the House of Mogg. Kurn has no male heirs. Worf reluctantly tells him that Alexander has not committed himself to the Rite and he knows his fighting skills are not what they should be. Kmtar suggests that they may be able to spark the boy's interest.

Riker is not deterred from hunting the Duras sisters. He knows they were last seen on DS9 some months ago and contacts Quark - who happens to owe him money from a very lucky day he had in the casino. Quark exchanges the information that the sisters were ordering mining equipment to go after deposits in Pakled territory. He sets a course for the most probable site. Kmtar is quite surprised that Riker has been able to pick up the Duras' trail.

Kmtar knows Alexander was terribly frightened for his father and sets up a holodeck recreation of the scene to show him how to fight off the attackers. He makes progress but disappoints the adults by being unwilling to kill a dangerous opponent. Worf and Kmtar argue later about the boy's future. Kmtar wants to send him to a Klingon school but Worf insists the Enterprise is his home. Kmtar says that as long as he stays here he will be more human than Klingon. For the good of the House, he questions Worf's fitness to raise Alexander.

Riker does indeed force Lursa and Be'tor out into the open. They agree to beam aboard to confront the evidence against them. They have no love for Worf but deny having tried to kill him. They become disturbed when they see the knife. The symbols represent their family, but besides themselves there is also a symbol representing Lursa's son. She has only known for a few days that she is pregnant and has told no one about it except her sister...

James Sloyan returns yet again in a strong guest performance adding a Klingon to his roster of Romulan and Bajoran roles. Kmtar may be the least impressive of the three, but that has something to do with who he turns out to be. And the dazzling lack of explanation for how he got there. Gwynyth Walsh and Barbara March return as the exponents of Klingon cleavage, Lursa and Be'tor. Their part is quite small, but this serves as a reminder of who they are as they prepare to appear in the TNG film. Brian Bonsall returns as Alexander after almost two years since his last episode - time spent busily making films as he has become Disney's low budget answer to Macauley Culkin. He is considerably taller but remains rather whiny.

There was an effort to get Suzie Plakson to film a dream sequence as K'Ehleyr for this story, but she was too exhausted from working on her sitcom, Love and War.(6)

22)**Bloodlines** 7th May 1994

Written by Nicholas Sagan; Director Les Landau; Music Dennis McCarthy; Visual Effects Supervisor David Stipes

When it became known that Picard would meet up with A Son He Never Knew He Had, many voices were raised in protest at turning him into another James Kirk.

An object appears out of nowhere and approaches the Enterprise. Data decides that it is a small unmanned probe just as it hails Picard by name. It releases a holographic projection of the Ferengi Bok, who tells Picard he still seeks revenge for the death of his son 15 years ago. Bok tried once before to kill Picard to revenge the destruction of his son's ship when it fought a battle with the Stargazer (The Battle).

He has decided that the proper revenge is to kill Picard's son. He says Picard thought he could hide him from Bok, but Jason Vigo is as good as dead. No one is more surprised by the message than Picard. He orders the probe beamed aboard for analysis and tells Data to search Federation records for any mention of a Jason Vigo - and he should start with a Miranda Vigo who would have been born on New Gaul about fifty years ago. He also wants to ask the Ferengi government about what they know of Bok's activities.

Riker brings him information later that there is a Jason Vigo who is about 23 and lives on Kaymore 5. Picard tells Riker that there is a possibility that the boy is his son. He was involved for a short time with Miranda Vigo on shore leave 24 years ago. It had been a very romantic and intense affair - perhaps because they knew he would be leaving in two weeks. They tried to keep in touch for a while, but never saw each other again. If the child was his, she never told him. But, then, she was very independent and strong willed.

But he concludes that whether Jason is his son or not, he is in danger as long as Bok thinks he is. They set course to Kaymore 5 but have trouble finding any information there. Since there are few humans on that world, they eliminate them by age and sex until they find someone rock climbing in a deep cavern by themselves. Because of seismic activity, Picard has the young man beamed directly to the ship.

Jason is understandably startled and thinks he must be in trouble so he denies who he is. When told that he is here because of a threat against his life, he must also be told why. He wants to know if it is true - his mother never told him anything about his father except that he was in Starfleet and she died a few years ago. He agrees to allow Doctor Crusher to perform a genetic test. While they wait for the results, Picard tries to find out something about Jason's activities and job, but only gets evasive answers.

Doctor Crusher announces that Jason's DNA is a combination of his mother's and Jean-Luc Picard's. Picard takes Jason to his quarters, where it becomes apparent that he does not share the Captain's interest in archeology or his taste for tea. Life on Kaymore has taught him that things only have value if you can eat them or sell them. Picard finds the situation awkward but wants to make it clear that if he had known about Jason he would have been a part of his life.

Jason wants to return to the surface but Picard wants him to stay where they can protect him until he can find and confront Bok. Jason agrees he doesn't want to have to hide forever so he reluctantly decides to stay. The Ferengi are finally heard from. Bok was stripped of his rank and sent to prison for his attack on Picard before. But he bought his way out of prison two years ago. What little they learn about Bok's whereabouts helps Data and Geordi use information gathered from examining the probe to pinpoint a probable star system to look for Bok.

Picard goes to Beverly Crusher because he needs to talk to a parent. He finds Jason putting up all sorts of barriers and he has no idea what lies underneath. He decides it may be wrong for him to force the issue - perhaps he should just let the boy come to him when he is ready. Beverly asks if that is what is best for Jason or easiest for himself?

That night, Bok appears again in Picard's bedroom, threatening to kill Jason. Data and Geordi are mystified as to how this was accomplished. They don't think it was another hologram but no vessel was detected in range to transport anyone aboard. Picard orders a security detail to keep an eye on Jason in case Bok beams aboard again. Data disturbs the Captain by reporting that he has found that his son has a criminal record on Kaymore 5, although it is all minor offences - petty theft, disturbing the peace and trespassing complaints.

He does not confront Jason with this but they have an argument anyway because the boy does not like being followed around by security. He rejects Picard's efforts to get better acquainted, saying he is leaving as soon as this is over. They reach the designated star system but several hours of searching finds no trace of Bok's ship. Still, the Ferengi suddenly appears in Picard's ready room to announce that his vengeance is at hand.

Then Doctor Crusher gets an emergency summons to Jason's quarters, where the boy has collapsed in front of the security guards.

Ken Olandt is the boy who might be a Picard. He does an adequate job of being something other than an ideal son without being totally unlikeable. Lee Arenberg plays Damon Bok, although Frank Corsentino played the part in *The Battle*. Bok seems to have gotten more wasteful with the passage of time. It beggars belief that he could have found out about a 24-year old two-week-affair, and gotten lucky enough to locate a son of that woman who was about the right age. If his information is so good he should have realised that the easiest and surest way to cause Picard great pain would be to polish off young Mister Crusher in front of his mother and leave Picard with the guilt and consequences.(7)

Kathleen Toth

in black

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REELING IN THE YEARS

THE FIRST thing to notice about the DWB Interview File is just how classy it looks. It's the type of book you can leave on your coffee table and not have to worry about Auntie Mavis ("Oh, not that terrible DOCTOR WHO again"). She'll think you've finally started that Open University course.

Bleached white, with a bubbled up DWB logo and a decent weight, it looks like a damn fine piece of publishing. "You can't judge a book by it's cover," I hear you say. "No, but you can tell how much it's going to cost," I reply. £14.99 UK, $29.95 US.

But what of it's contents? Well, here I have two confessions to make. Firstly, I was one of those who conducted an interview (Paul Darrow - nice bloke) so I feel I have a bit of a vested interest in what OTHER people might think of the book. And secondly, I haven't finished reading it yet! In my defence, I should say I didn't realise what great value for money it was (grovel, grovel). I allocated the Interview File a week of bed time reading and soon realised I was never going to finish it in time. This is definitely not an over priced picture book, although the photos are well used and some highly unusual (please note Miss Manning watchers). This is a book that needs to be read even when you are just dipping into it.

In fact it does make a very good bedside companion. It is one of those books that you can achieve something with in five minutes, or spend hours over. The interviews run the full gamut of DOCTOR WHO's history (from scriptwriters to producers to actors) and include many of the history makers in telefantasy of the last two decades. In an appreciated move, the interviewees have been allowed to add postscripts to their interviews. Also many of the interviews have been re-edited as dialogues. Often this allows the interview to seem almost like a mini autobiography. This is most evident in the Nabil Shaban interview and the Sydney Newman piece, which (with the strong language included) comes over as the first draft of "Sydney Newman When God Went To Lunch (an autobiography)".

The Eric Saward interview brought back some interesting memories of the revelations that he made — would he be willing to stick out his neck so far again I wonder?

The Lalla Ward interview caused me to go back and watch the *Horns of Nimon* — which I think is an interesting reaction to say the least!

I'm sure Gary will want me to mention that there is an exclusive INT interview - so I have.

Moving away from DOCTOR WHO, the Jackie Pearce interview is quite spectacular (now there's someone who really NEEDS to write an autobiography), especially with it's behind the scenes exposes (some of which I got Paul Darrow to confirm - plug, plug).

Unfortunately, it's getting to the point where the reviewer just starts to compile lists — which is a good point to call a halt and give this whole project a (9.5), although it could be a (10) by the time I've finished reading it...

Jason Haigh Ellery

THEY SAY you should never look back, something might be gaining on you. Yet it would seem churlish to suggest that alumni of DOCTOR WHO should never return to the series through which they have given us so much pleasure. Many a new tune is played on an old fiddle. For Barry Letts last year's radio series was a dignified if qualified success. Like a grand old rock band Pertwee, Courtney and Sladen reprised their roles as if they had never split and strummed through new material liberally peppered with greatest hits.

Adapting his production into a novel might seem a little unnecessary since anyone may clap earphones on the original, yet the marketing logic of this move is sound. Letts has turned out a well crafted book that conveys all the spirit of the original. Those expecting any difference or elaboration from the tapes will be disappointed but if you're in the mood for adventure, chills and thrills await. The Golden Age of DOCTOR WHO is 'When you're thirteen' and any novice fan picking up this book will be well served by its crisp pace and clear narrative. It makes me feel a bit like a jaded connoisseur appreciating an honest table wine while craving the complex flavour of a fine NEW ADVENTURE. Well, even for my ancient palette there was much entertainment in *Paradise of Death*.

This was not a simple recreation of his own Seventies formula — invading monsters walking empty English streets etc. Indeed there is no particular attempt to place the story in a contemporary milieu. Wherever you stand on the UNIT chronology Letts won't put a foot wrong — but fundamentally this is a story for the Nineties. We have an American style theme park on Hampstead Heath (shades of Wanstonia and EuroDisney), Expanded (Virtual) Reality is taken in everyone's stride (we had yet to see Space Invaders when Jon Pertwee hung up his cloak for the last time), the Brig is thwarted by the UN and the PM's office and — here's the clincher — Bessie has a cellular phone. Chairman Freeth and Tragen are every bit the modern corporate villains, their rapaciousness embodied by Rapine, the all-purpose vegetable product and ecological nightmare. Freeth's dissipated amorality and Tragen's hungry sadism come over very well even without Harold Innocent and Peter Miles' excellent performances, making you wish their downfall had been slightly better constructed as, like the audio version, the book ends rather abruptly.

Rather than paste in long descriptive passages Letts has opted to fill out the bones of his script with characterisation, and if some of the settings are a bit sketchy the characters are well defined and bold as life. Letts obviously feels at home using Sarah as a narrative voice. She comes over as a strong protagonist in her own right. In actuality the Doctor's real companion is the Brigadier and Sarah has her own companion, the irritating Jeremy Fitzoliver. As an upper-class buffoon Jeremy comes off much better in a very middle-class story than the appalling Cockney spiv Grebber. There are some very colourful, very corrupt figures in the building trade, but I have trouble imagining Grebber organising a loft conversion, let alone the grandiose towers of Space World. Thank goodness he gets dropped (ha ha) early on.

Paradise of Death
by Barry Letts (£4.99)

In pure plot terms there are a few problems with *Paradise of Death*. The carefully constructed trap that is Space World is neglected once the action shifts to Parakon, flouting the law of conservation of plot elements. Is this insidious and anachronistic structure still open to the public in DOCTOR WHO's alternative time stream? And if so, what do nice young Londoners do without the Heath? Similarly Barry Letts has not taken the opportunity to redress the inadequacies of the radio play's ending. After the struggles and sacrifices exacted from the rebels Parakon falls rather easily to them, the doddery old President is restored (why?) and everything is alright again. Quite at odds with the unbreakable cycle of exploitation, escapism and voyeurism central to Parakon life. Those who complained at Cartmel and Aaronovitch's pessimistic futures will get little joy from this compelling idea of reinventing the Amphitheatre as mass TV bloodlust (WWF dream on). Pitted against the challenge of such a culture Pertwee's Doctor has no easy task to rise to. Barry pulls off the final storming of the Stadium, but only just. Sadly the narrative finishes a breath after our heroes triumph, and even my thirteen year old reader recognises that there's more to a revolution than fireworks.

Overall this is a fresher look at DOCTOR WHO than some of the weaker NEW ADVENTURES and far from the lifeless adaptation many of us feared. Barry Letts clearly enjoyed writing this and his affection for and understanding of the characters shines through. For a genre that could get hung up on the psychological sophistication of recent NEW ADVENTURES this is a welcome restatement and reinterpretation of the Boys Own-adventure story-telling values that made DOCTOR WHO the institution it is today ("Reggie"). If you're as grizzled as I then this is for completists, but if you're thirteen what are you doing reading this old rag? Pop out to W.H.Smiths and get some of the good stuff while you can, you won't live in the Golden Age of DOCTOR WHO forever. (7)

Allan Toombs

Theatre of War
by Justin Richards (£4.99)

I HAD BARELY opened Gary Russell's *Legacy* when a copy of Justin Richards's *Theatre of War* landed on my doorstep. (The phrase 'landed on my doormat' is not only a cliche, it's a lie. In fact, our esteemed editor handed it to me in person, drawing it from his inside breast pocket and pushing it across the pub table in the style Oskar Schindler adopts to deliver a particularly hefty bribe.) In fact, I'd only got as reading *Legacy*'s dedication — to the author's mother, for cultivating his 'interest in all things readable.' I mention this because Justin's book begins with a similarly literary acknowledgement: with a hint of self-deprecating irony, *Theatre of War* offers thanks to William Shakespeare.

Theatre starts as the tale of an archaeological excavation of an antique amphitheatre. As at the entrance to Tutankhamun's tomb (and, as is pointed out, at the portal of Dante's Hell), there is posted outside the ruins of this theatre a curse and a warning which damns all those who would dare enter there. Mr Russell and Mr Richards post similar warnings (or manifestoes) at the start of their books in the forms of their expressions of literary endebtedness. But I'm concerned by Gary's avowed appreciation of 'all' writing — the world is full of the most appalling books (*Mein Kampf*, *Timewyrm:Genesys*, anything by Jeffrey Archer), and an indiscriminate literary taste can lead to a poor writing technique.

Justin Richards is evidently less of a literary omnivore, his textual palate is quite self-consciously cultured. I don't wish to give the impression that *Theatre of War* is some kind of silly literary roman a clef: but it does rely upon a complex, clever web of allusions, which do not always prove as high-minded as one might have feared. Talk of Turgenev, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Carroll, Ford, Stoppard, Coleridge, Michelangelo and Mozart stands alongside references to popular cinema *Casablanca*, *Star Wars*, *Terminator II* (but, thank God, none of the usual chatter about pop music) — topped by a (sometimes overwhelming) heap of allusions to various DOCTOR WHO adventures (I gave up counting at twenty

stories, but I'm sure there are more). Most of Richards's chapter titles are taken from plays — by Ibsen, Shaw, Middleton, Miller, Beckett, Pirandello; but one chapter title, incongruously enough, appears to be a line from *Paradise Towers*: 'You never can tell.' (My ignorance is showing — I've just looked it up and *You Never Can Tell* is in fact a drama by George Bernard Shaw. Well, you never can tell....) Of course, Justin's cornucopia of allusions is centred around much talk of the works of Stratford's most famous son: not just *Hamlet* (which crops up with a frequency that borders on the indulgent — it makes STAR TREK look bardophobic), but also *As You Like It*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and numerous others I missed or can't be bothered to mention. Perhaps the most illuminating and cunning reference is to *Love's Labours Won*: as far as I know, only a single original mention of this non-existent text exists — in a contemporary essay on Shakespeare, which refers to *Love's Labours Lost*, *Love's Labours Won*. Most people reckon that this is merely an extended title for the extant play (as in *Twelfth Night or What You Will*); but there are those who have suggested that it refers to two plays — that *Love's Labours Lost* (which ends relatively inconclusively) had a sequel, which has since been lost. It is a shadowy half-text: a bit like the second, missing book of Aristotle's *Poetics*. And, in the same way that *The Name of the Rose* is an account of a hunt for Aristotle's lost work, so *Theatre of War* is the story of the discovery of a fictive drama, *The Good Soldiers*, by one Stanoff Osterling, a playwright of the dim & distant future.

Like the Umberto Eco of *Foucault's Pendulum*, or the Iain Banks of *Consider Phlebas*, Justin Richards has peppered his book with liberal quotations from T.S. Eliot — most obviously, and most frequently, from *The Waste Land*. *The Waste Land* is a rereading of a lot of other texts, including quite a few to which *Theatre of War* alludes: *Hamlet*, *The Tempest*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Dante's *Inferno*, Sophocles's Theban plays. Towards the end of Justin's novel, we hear a speech scripted by the Doctor, a jumble of quotations and misquotations, which seeks (like the lines Hamlet adds to *The Mousetrap*) to set time back in joint. Is this plagiarism? (And if it is, then is Richards's whole novel — is Eliot's poem itself — no more than a melange of stolen phrases?) The Doctor denies it: 'I am not a plagiarist.... But I did take opportunity to pay homage to several great poets and playwrights.'

But is all of *Theatre of War* an act of homage? It does not prove so kind to all its sources: one storyline it adopts (and junks) concerns the ability of a load of mud to come alive. The idea is borrowed from the BLAKE'S 7 episode, *Sand*, and *Theatre of War* is not alone in borrowing it: David Bishoff's STAR TREK — THE NEXT GENERATION novel, *Grounded*, also gives Tanith Lee's idea a rehash (and for all I know the idea was not originally Ms Lee's). Yet Richards's novel does something more interesting with this storyline — it exploits it and then it debunks it: it says the idea owes more to imagination than to science, and belongs in the realm of the B-movie.

Theatre of War is a very clever book (perhaps too ostentatiously so for some tastes), and I have every admiration for its technical competence (and indeed its moments of wit and flair); indeed I have always liked Justin's style. I read it at one sitting: partly to meet a deadline, but also because I discovered I was finding it hard to put down. But I cannot say I am 100% sure of it. It starts off somewhere between *Earthshock* and *Aliens*, a promising tale of a military-scientific taskforce sent to investigate the fate of a doomed expedition (accompanied by that expedition's one, female survivor); but it quickly lapses into a fantastical palimpsest of John Dover Wilson's epic of literary critical idiocy, *What Happens in Hamlet*. At times, it also seems a shade too derivative — or is a joke about the Doctor's taking dictation from a great playwright with a dodgy wrist a homage to Douglas Adams, and not just a piece of plagiarism? Where do we draw the line? We can applaud *Theatre of War* for having the honesty to ask that question itself; but I for one do not entirely agree with its answer.

Kate Orman has suggested that the best aspect of the Sylvester McCoy era (and the NEW ADVENTURES in particular) may lie in a willingness to confront big issues like racism and rape. I must beg to differ with Ms Orman's assertion: I find these issues far too serious to be trivialised and exploited by what is (let's face it) an unsophisticated form of a juvenile genre of fiction. DOCTOR WHO has sometimes been exemplary in its attempts to address these issues: but that is because it has done so by analogy and moral generalisation. I therefore found myself quite uncomfortable with the way the Nazi holocaust was thrown into *Theatre of War* as kind of incidental background detail: Ace reads of an alien world's "death camps ... genetic experiments...incinerators" — later she comments that this civilisation "makes the Nazis look like Dad's Army". It is a remark of such horrible tactlessness that it makes Terrance Dicks's *Exodus* seem thoughtful and well informed (what a title for a book about a world in which the Judaic people have been exterminated!). I recommend that anyone who disagrees should read one of Primo Levi's memoirs of Auschwitz (or even just see *Schindler's List*). There are (to appropriate a phrase of Wilfred Owen's) some things of which this sort of fiction is not yet fit to speak.

I suspect a lot of readers will enjoy *Theatre of War*, but that some may be a bit baffled by it. It has a few plot problems (not least of which is the way the opening paragraph gives away the story's big twist), and I'm not entirely sure of the reason for all the bother on the planet Menaxus in the first place. It also rather overdoes its use of fake documents and lengthy invented epigraphs. I guess that most people won't find the plot as fun (or as satisfying) as that of *Legacy*; and those who hanker after Paul Cornell's breed of fantasticality will be (for the most part) disappointed; but it remains a worthwhile (if slightly soulless) novel of extreme and sustained intelligence, and will probably make a much better read the second time around. On its own terms, it is unbeatable: but those are terms which some might not find too easy to accept. The play is indeed the thing for this refined yet almost amoral novel: it's just a shame it fails to catch the conscience as a story of this sort ought.(8)

Alec Charles

THE AVENGERS

Lumière video - £10.99

1:The Town of No Return & From Venus With Love

"Where have all the people gone?"

The Town of No Return was the first story of Season 4 and instantly took THE AVENGERS to a new level, where every shot was beautifully filmed, but from a retrospective viewpoint it's pedestrian fare compared with other episodes in this season.

Of course, this is also Diana Rigg's first story and we are smitten the moment she removes that fencing mask. No wonder Steed can't resist slapping her on the bottom with his sabre.

Steed and Emma take a trip to Little-Bazeley-by-the-Sea, a village on the coast. It must be nice there - none of the agents sent there are coming back. The story is essentially that of a village with lovely pubs and foreboding gloomy churches where no-one, not even the vicar, can be trusted. Not the first time that plot had been used admittedly (think *Village of the Damned*) but certainly not the last (think *The Dæmons*).

The slightly eerie quality is probably given by the fact that there are sparingly few incidental characters - Steed and Emma carry the whole story as investigators. Terence Alexander is good as Piggy Warren (complete with handlebar moustache) and ADAM ADAMANT LIVES!'s Juliet Harmer is the creepy Miss Manson, but in all it lacks a larger-than-life crazy villain.

Something's up and it's not badger hunting - *Town* keeps you guessing and so works pretty well as a mystery story that belies its beleaguered production history.

My advice to Steed: as ever, look underground. (6)

"Venusians?"

"Well we've got to the moon, something's bound to make a return visit someday."

Oh dear, what's this? A ball of light from outer space, giving top astronomers more than a few grey hairs? Cheaper than a peroxide rinse, yes, but isn't this AVENGERS programme getting a bit ridiculous? The opener to Season 5, *Venus* was almost as far removed from *Town* as *Town* had been from *Brief for Murder*. Each shot contains every colour of the spectrum and Di Rigg's hair is positively lustrous.

Venus gives a fair indication of what is to come in the season: ludicrous plot; throwaway conclusion; ten minute cameos by ace Brit funsters of 1966/67; ending with a highly choreographed fight scene and awful pun. What a premise!

Thus an attack from space (accompanied by a very recognisable British film industry sound effect) bumps off Jeremy Lloyd as Bert Smith - an aristocratic chimney sweep who doesn't use his real name: "Whoever heard of anyone having their chimney swept by a Fortescue Winthrop Smith(e)?" Then the fireball prematurely ends Jon Pertwee's guest spot - Brigadier Whitehead gets bleached and exits "white-headed".

And there's Dr Primble, too - he's this episode's absent-minded professor. You simply must keep an eye out for the scene where Steed sees that silly old optician. Let's just say that it would be very short-sighted of Steed to forget that it's the quiet ones you have to watch... And so, can our heroes really be facing an alien enemy, or is it all just a trick of the light? There's plenty of light-hearted action before all is revealed.

I find it hard to give any episode less than a 10 in this, one of the finest seasons of television ever, but as all things are relative, I'll give it (8).

2:The Cybernauts & The Return of the Cybernauts

Volume Two contains the supposedly classic episodes *The Cybernauts* and *The Return of the Cybernauts*. The former is basically a tale of industrial espionage with one firm, United Automation (headed by Doctor Clement Armstrong) trying to run its competitors out of business. To do this, Armstrong uses his robotic creations, the Cybernauts, to do his dirty work. All that Steed and Mrs Peel have to go on are the crushed pens found on the bodies of all the dead executives...

Michael Gough is great as the wheelchair-bound Armstrong, but none of the other guest cast, such as Frederick Jaeger (as Armstrong's assistant Benson), are really given a chance to shine. There are quite a few plot devices that throw the suspicions, such as a karate class which Mrs Peel visits while wearing a horribly frumpy suit — and she still beats their karate queen! The actual Cybernauts themselves aren't really all that impressive. Their heads look as if they're made from polystyrene (probably because they are!), and don't strike me as being made of metal, but that's being picky. Still, they're not as cheap as those in *The Last of the Cybernauts...?* (7)

In a rare example of continuity in THE AVENGERS, Benson makes a second appearance in *The Return of the Cybernauts*. Controlled this time by Armstrong's brother (with a different surname!) the Cybernauts are kidnapping top scientists to devise a lingering death for Steed and Emma.

Stealing the honours as best actor is Peter Cushing, the suave and charming Paul Beresford. Also noteworthy is Aimi MacDonald, who's completely loveable as Rosie, the dippy secretary. Pity she's only a minor character.

Also amusing is the moment when Emma is being controlled by the villain's hypno-watches. With total control of her body, he removes her jacket and... sends her to stop Steed?!?! The possibilities of a remote controlled Diana Rigg still remain a pleasing thought...

I also rather enjoyed the endings of both episodes — Mrs Peel pushes over the deactivated Cybernaut in the first tale, while Steed demands his turn in the sequel. While both Cybernaut tales are entertaining they are by no means amongst the best THE AVENGERS had to offer. Neither of Phillip Levene's scripts are outstanding, the plots are readily forgettable, and despite good performances from the human villains, the Cybernaut stories aren't really worthy of the myth that has built around them.(7)

3:A Touch of Brimstone & The Bird Who Knew Too Much

"One big bang - and they'll all be gone"

A Touch of Brimstone is, I'm sure, an AVENGERS episode you'll all know, thanks to its 'controversial' nature, perpetuated by subsequently reported tales of cuts and bans. This is the episode that cemented THE AVENGERS' 'kinky' image, but if you're looking for S&M kicks then I suggest you try elsewhere. *Brimstone* never looks dated, but it is a little tame today. Still, Diana Rigg is certainly overtly sexy as The Queen of Sin so its perhaps not too difficult to work out what everyone was getting steamed up about in 1965. Disregarding the episode's colourful past it still stands up as one of the best of the season.

The Hellfire Club are a group of hedonistic anarchists who get together a couple of times a week to indulge in unhealthily sinful pursuits, enjoy discrediting political figures in embarrassingly public ways and actually think that Guy Fawkes had a pretty neat idea. With the Guest Villain spot filled by the unique talent of Peter Wyngarde you know that this has to be a good episode. Having him play off Macnee and Rigg, the episode could hardly fail.

Though Patrick Macnee is in particularly arch form (trying to out-act Wyngarde no doubt) the camp isn't laid on with a trowel: there is genuine remorse at the death of Lord D'arcy while the revels, where lusty wenches are the playthings of the men of the Hellfire Club, have a decidedly sinister air. Mrs Peel looks positively uncomfortable amongst this debauchery, much more so than on any occasion that saw her bound and gagged. It's perhaps that atmosphere that unsettled the ABC programme heads back in 1965.

Once we get to The Night of All Sins, however, everyone is playing it for laughs. Even more priceless than the sight of Mrs Peel as the Queen of Sin is the look on Steed's face when he claps eyes on her...

A Touch of Brimstone disproves the old fallacy that THE AVENGERS had to be 'science fiction' to be any good.(10)

"His capacity for learning is astonishing: the whole of Hamlet's soliloquy without pause... Lincoln's Gettysburg address without fault. Nothing to Captain Crusoe. And then there is his gift for mimicry... a parrot paragon."
"And now he's a polly-gone"

Secret information is going East, but how? It would seem to be something to do with birds of the feathered variety. All very seedy. Aerial photographs of top secret missile bases are found, apparently taken at a height of one hundred feet. What could fly that low and not be detected? Steed and Emma hunt for Captain Crusoe, the stool pigeon who gives away secrets parrot-fashion...

The Bird Who Knew Too Much contains a lot of engaging, colourful and witty scenes and characters: Kenneth Cope's Tom Savage, the swinging fashion photographer snapping away at Emma dressed only in her union jack; Steed takes a shot at being Tom's model too, and shows Patrick to be adept at striking a pose; Ron Moody is a man who teaches birds to talk, and on the cue of a note from the triangle. Why there is a stuffed(?) bird perched atop his mortar board, I don't know, but it comes to a fine, feathered end.

So it's just unfortunate that all of these set pieces don't really gel. The first half is really quite slow and the two rough-and-ready hoods, Robin and Verret, are a thoroughly unremarkable couple, reminding me of no poor Thorson story in particular. Steed and Emma go from one location to another in the pursuit of an engaging plot, but fail to find it. We have fun on the way, but the mind wanders when there's a beginning, several middles and an end, all of which are unconnected.

The star of the show is the aviary exhibition with its multi-coloured cages and stuffed parrots nesting on blue trees and that sums up the problem with this episode. Many people might suppose or remember that THE AVENGERS was all about lovely visuals and lots of humour. Indeed *Bird* has both in quantity, but THE AVENGERS was also about a sense of narrative that held the attention and here it's lacking, leaving us with some admittedly gorgeous wallpaper. (6)

4:Death at Bargain Prices & Escape In Time

"I asked the chief creditor where to find you and he said 'Our Mrs Peel is in ladies underwear'. I rattled up the stairs three at a time"
"Merry quips department on the fifth floor, sir"

First floor for millinery, and atomic rocket scientists, scheming shop assistants with Emma Peel and Steed going up.

I risk giving away the plot here as I try to explain that there is no plot, but anyway: something's afoot in Pinter's Department Store and it transpires that the store owner Horatio Kane has kidnapped renowned atom-splitter Professor Popple in order to create a bomb for him. Kane tells us that the entire fabric of the store is an atomic bomb(?) which he will use to hold Britain to ransom. If they don't listen then it's a case of everything must go. The mysterious store receipts turn out to be feed cards for Professor Popple's computer. Why? And if they are feed cards, then how come one acts as a map for locating the detonator?

Still, I suppose that even the best plot would be outshone by Patrick Macnee examining a pair of knickers in the lingerie department. Bargain Prices is a slower paced, fairly dramatic piece interspersed with some cracking Steed-isms. Mrs Peel doesn't get many good lines in this one, and all the lines Diana Rigg does get, she recites as if her elocution teacher's life depended on it.

Actually, in the best tradition of DEPARTMENT S, the drama never quite lives up to the dialogue-free teaser scene (no matter how many times the piece of 'dramatic' music gets played). The pace suddenly increases near the end though with a whole set of tight scenes that see the Avengers run amuck through the store and Steed fend off a knife thrower with a cricket bat. How can one score eighteen with one stroke of the bat? Watch and find out.

A good (7) but if you want more pace then you'll prefer the next episode on the tape.

"... you purchase a one-way ticket to the past and your troubles of the present are over"

Waldo Thyssen is offering a very special service to criminals who want to disappear with their recently acquired loot. For a half share of the spoils he sends them back in time where they'll never be found. What these diabolical masterminds actually find is a none too warm welcome - Thyssen's ancestors are bumping them off as soon as they arrive. A time machine who's only source of control appears to be a one-armed bandit? Well, it has to be a bit of a gamble ..

Via a bizarre procession of cuddly toys (a crocodile, a giraffe, a kangaroo, and an elephant) THE AVENGERS take the trip in this, one of the campest of what was rather a camp series.

Most outstanding of all are the scenes that feature no dialogue whatsoever, all of which take place in 'Mackidockie Court', a fabulous set from Wilfred Shingleton. They couldn't have shot these scenes on location, since such a location never really existed. The look on the barber's face when he finds Mrs Peel in his chair (awaiting a shave)... well, it says it all. You'd probably already guessed that the barber's name is Mr T Sweeney...

Mrs Peel finds herself in the stocks in this one, when transported back to the Elizabethan era (when "the men were so tiny" as she comments mysteriously) and yes it's "enough to daze and bewitch a man's senses, to inflame him to lust" as the evil Matthew Thyssen correctly points out (Peter Bowles, as ever, makes the most charming, sweating villain).

It's all very colourful, all very camp and all very deserving of a (10).

5:Too Many Christmas Trees & The Joker

Too Many Christmas Trees is, perhaps, the episode which epitomises season four at its best. Atmospheric in a way that colour could never match, fantastic in a way which would have seemed mundane in Season Five, but incredible in THE NEW AVENGERS, full of building tension like the best of the Blackman episodes, but given an extra spine-tingling quality by the precision of film editing, it combines the best elements of every era in a way unique to this transitional season.

Invited to spend Christmas at the home of Dickens-obsessed publisher Brandon Storey, Steed is disturbed to find events following the pattern of a recurring nightmare in which a mocking Father Christmas leads him to the guillotine. Is he insane, as Mrs Peel comes increasingly to fear, or is there an even *more* unpleasant explanation, one connected with a fellow guest, the sinister Dr Teazel? Who knows - but an agent Steed dreamt of has died of a brainstorm...

Too Many Christmas Trees is not without humour (Mrs Peel's reaction as she sees the method in Steed's (literal) madness is very effective — "I'll give you two, oh" indeed!), but it's the disturbing feel which make it a classic. The supernatural is at work here, and in more ways than is immediately obvious – events are prefigured through choice of costume in more ways than just the villains' plans demand... Patrick MacNee's performance as a vulnerable and haunted Steed (suffering, for perhaps the only time in the series' history, from a hangover in the opening scene!) strikes another blow to suggestions that he's a graduate of the Roger Moore school of acting. It's a great pity that his potential was never more clearly realised, not so much because he did THE AVENGERS, but because he was never offered parts to stretch him beyond Steed clones after its end. Eerie, gripping like a slowly tightening vice, *Too Many Christmas Trees* is a monochrome nightmare to match the classic of the genre, *Dead of Night* — in which guest star Mervyn Johns also appeared, as man condemned to dream a murderous recurring nightmare...(10+)

The Joker is the fifth season's shot at the "Creepy old house" episode so beloved of THE AVENGERS, and also gives

Tara (Linda Thorson) & Steed sample some champagne (Noon Doomsday — Lumiere)

Diana Rigg her greatest chance to hog the limelight since, oh, the last time they tried that plot, in *The House That Jack Built*. In comparison to that, however, *The Joker* is a more talky piece, at least in its early stages, as might be expected of a Blackman-episode remake...

The red herrings of the plot rather distract from the atmosphere in places — Ronald Lacey's 'Strange Young man' is too obviously insane to be truly dangerous, and rather slows the episode's pace in its early stages. But once the dialogue dies down and the atmosphere picks up it's excellent. Diana Rigg pulls out all the stops as Emma comes close to the edge, and Peter Jeffrey's eventual appearance as her betrayed paramour is genuinely disturbing. Helping it all immensely is the single greatest piece of music ever composed for THE AVENGERS, an eerie melancholy piece later used to great effect when THE AVENGERS took Steed back to the paranoic territory of *Too Many Christmas Trees* in *Stay Tuned*.(9)

6:The Gravediggers & The Living Dead

Volume Six has a morbid feel to it, with The *Gravediggers* and *The Living Dead* linked together. In *The Gravediggers* Britain's early warning radar system develops a fault, but the only person with the knowledge to build a jamming device capable of causing the fault died recently. Steed sees the dead man in a nearby hospital, where Mrs Peel takes up employment, and finds operations being carried out with a blow torch... Ronald Fraser steals the acting honours here as Sir Horace Winslip, a man with his own miniature railway. The scene where he and Steed have lunch in a train carriage is a delight to watch, as Sir Horace's assistant, Frederick, simulates a train journey, complete with shaking carriages, rolling countryside, smoke and tunnels!

The Gravediggers is, without a doubt, one of the best AVENGERS episodes, with a quirky eccentric, ludicrous plot and a memorable end, with Mrs Peel tied to the rails as a train rushes towards her (but sadly no moustache twirling villain is on hand - that really would have been pushing things too far) (9)

The Living Dead is another of those stories that contains those quirky touches that only THE AVENGERS could have. Steed and Mrs Peel investigate the sighting of a ghost, and are joined by representatives of two groups, FOG (Friends Of Ghosts) and SMOG (Scientific Measurement Of Ghosts). Mrs Peel is kidnapped by the ghost, and finds herself in an underground city, which was built by miners trapped underground several years previously. The city will soon house 20,000 enemy agents ready to take over the country. Steed is also captured, and has to face a firing squad...

What other series could feature organisations with such silly names, or ludicrous plot ideas? *The Living Dead* doesn't take itself too seriously (not surprising, really!), with Julian Glover and Pamela Ann Davy as the principle villains. Glover isn't really given a chance to shine, but Davy is particularly good as Mandy McKay, and it isn't surprising that she was considered as a possible replacement for Diana Rigg. While not the best AVENGERS episode, it certainly isn't the worst. Highly watchable and good fun, *The Living Dead* scores (7).

7:The Dangermakers & The See-Through Man

Oh dear. Well, I suppose they had to release a dud sometime...and that's a little unfair to *The Dangermakers*. But it's a mediocre piece of work, and its inclusion on this tape is mystifying when the far superior *Two's a Crowd* would have been an appropriate companion to *The See Through Man*. But first, to *The Dangermakers*...

When elderly generals start taking childish risks, Steed and Peel investigate, and find an secret society of thrill-seekers threaded through the depths of the establishment and the armed services. But to discover the truth behind this apparently innocent (if dangerous) organisation, the Avengers must prove their love of thrills...

At base, this episode has much the same concept as *A Touch of Brimstone*, originally transmitted only a week later. But the difference lies in the execution: That concept is applied in too mundane a way, and the whole thing has a feel of plotting by numbers. The main villain proves to be the only character who hasn't yet had a significant role, the only character who could unmask Mrs Peel in time for the fight scene, while his eventual aim would seem more at home in a children's thriller such as FREEWHEELERS. Passable direction (especially in the bizarre opening 'chicken-run' sequence) from the incomparable Charles Crichton and some decent (though restrained) performances from Nigel Davenport and Douglas Wilmer do little to compensate for this.(5)

Amongst the incredible ideas and outrageous situations of the fifth season, an invisible man on the loose seems almost mundane. Indeed, what seems more incredible is *The See Through Man*'s failure to adequately justify its rational explanation of the Opposition's apparent contribution to invisible earnings... It's a bit like SCOOBY DOO, really — we still saw that ghost disappear, even if he was only the caretaker in a rubber mask, just as here we've 'seen' the invisible man enter areas he couldn't possibly have rigged with special effects...

Still, if the resolution is disappointing, the trail is fun enough, and enlivened by Warren Mitchell's fawning, dissolute Ambassador Brodny, least among the Opposition's secret weapons. In a way, his role in *The See Through Man* repeats that of his earlier appearance in *Two's a Crowd* — he's once again being misled over the nature of a visiting Agent by his own side, who hope that his consternation will help them fool Steed and Emma. Steed's (mocking) affection for the character is made clear by the final scene, and it's a pity this was to prove his final outing. As nominal head of 'the other side', he'd've made an effective comedic foil for Mother during the Tara King episodes... Ah well — an enjoyable episode, but it's hardly unmissable, and alongside *The Dangermakers* it adds up to a poorly selected and rather lacklustre tape. (6)

8:Small Game for Big Hunters & The Hidden Tiger

Small Game for Big Hunters is another episode whose release has come unexpectedly early, though here the connection to its companion is at least obvious (*The Man-Eater of Surrey Green* would still have made an appropriate, and superior, alternative though.)

The Winds of Change are blowing through Africa — but could they really blow a Kalayan insect all the way to Britain? It would certainly seem so, as sleeping sickness strikes in the home counties, and native devotees of the Curse of Sleep cult lurk in the bushes...

As an episode which breaks one of THE AVENGERS cardinal rules ("No blacks"), it's interesting to note that, despite the use of a string of clichés from the darkest age of Dark Continent fiction, this episode eventually comes down on the side of progress, as the threat comes from militant Colonialists determined to take back a newly independent African state. But the threat they pose is rather conventional, and wouldn't be out of place in an early Cathy or a late NEW AVENGERS episode. Again something of a By-Numbers piece, *Small Game for Big Hunters* is an acceptable but uninspired piece of Avenging.(5)

The Hidden Tiger, on the other hand... Well, I'll always have a soft spot for this episode, one of the best ever produced, as it's the AVENGERS episode which first caught my interest in the show, back in '82. Run back to back with *Small Game...*, it merely underlines the latter's disappointing aspects, as Big Game hunters once again pursue their trade in England — but this time it appears they have real prey to stalk... Something is attacking staff at a top secret establishment. Something big, and vicious, with claws...and something which can penetrate the toughest cage...

The Hidden Tiger is surprisingly graphic in its implied violence (for THE AVENGERS), but gets away with this through a perfect balance of humour.

The innuendo laden in-jokes which accompany Steed and Peel's attempts to describe their pets show (a mere three years after Eon Productions doubted they could get away with calling Honor Blackman's Bond character Pussy Galore) just how close to the wind The Avengers could sail on occasion — and the 'Jones' joke (milked brilliantly for every punchline it has) is worth a point in itself!

Ronnie Barker, making what curiously proved to be his one and only appearance in The Avengers, gives a masterclass performance as *this* week's obsessively eccentric head of an unlikely society — the feline Mr Chesire of PURRR (Philanthropic Union for Rescue, Relief and Recuperation of Cats), while a very young (and rather severely coiffured) Gabrielle Drake rather overdoes her playing of his wary (and obviously villainous) assistant. But that's quibbling. *The Hidden Tiger* is about as good as they get. (10)

9:Game & They Keep Killing Steed

And so, after eight tapes of solid M-Appeal, Lumière finally reach the rather variable, much maligned, but definitely under-rated Linda Thorson.

Distinguished men are dying bizarre deaths – a racing driver suffers a fatal car crash — while playing Scalectrix; a zoologist finds that a life sized game of snakes and ladders ends in a lethal snake bite... Both are dumped in a playground and the jigsaw pieces found on the dead men's bodies are slowly building a picture, but unless Steed can get ahead of the game, he'll be playing by the enemy's rules right up until the end...and that's proved fatal to everyone else.

Game has it all — adult childishness, surrealism (both realistic surrealism, in the form of the bodies in the playground, and *real* surrealism, in the form of the sets!), playing cards, a charming villain for Steed's past — even ... it could almost have been a recipe for disaster. Instead, this resultant episode is one which defies analysis — somehow, it all comes together near perfectly. Despite the disappointingly restrained eccentricity of the jigsaw expert Tara consults, perhaps the only real flaw comes in Bristow's tendency to cheat...surely he'd've played by the rules if he was the *true* Games King? But then, he's a jumped up sergeant really, not an officer, so he could hardly be expected to *really* understand honour...

Trivia fans will note that this is the second time in these tapes that The Avengers has faced a vengeful, playing card-obsessed maniac played by Peter Jeffrey, whose crimes were committed in Germany... but that doesn't really matter, does it?(9)

In *They Keep Killing Steed*, the other side decide that the best way to get themselves into a conference guarded by Mother's department is to pass one of their own off as Steed. So kidnapping him, they take a mould of his face and despatch it, along with 'Instant Plastic Surgery in a phial", to one of their agents. But Steed ensures duplicate packages are received by a few more agents, and soon the Steeds are eliminating each other, each convinced that he's the genuine imposter...much to Tara's consternation!

While Steed plays mind games with his captors, principally an almost unrecognisable Ray McAnally, Tara is left to deal with the situation herself — though she does have a little help from an amateur who talls somewhere between Adam Adamant and a young Simon Templar(!) An outrageously dyed Ian Ogilvy plays the womanising Baron Von Curt (a man who's now discovered you can have too much of a good thing), and is more than passable in both the comic sequences (backed by a rather nice theme, for once), and the more serious ones where Tara discovers Steed's body (time and time again). More disquieting is the blatant way in which Tara's feelings for Steed are expressed — whether the relationship had been consummated or not, the depths of her devotion undermine the chemistry which he'd enjoyed with his previous partners.

While not outstanding, *They Keep Killing Steed* is an agreeably outrageous romp, with just enough grit to keep the humour anchored...(7)

10:Castle De'Ath & A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Station

Castle De'Ath and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Station* make up arguably the best tape released to date.

A drowned frogman is found in the moat of Castle De'Ath in the Scottish Highlands, which later receives a visit from Mrs Peel, working for ABORCASHATA (the Advisory Bureau On Refurbishment of Castles And Stately Homes As Tourist Attractions). The Laird, Ian De'Ath, doesn't want visitors at the Castle, which is apparently haunted by a bagpipe-playing ghost. Mrs Peel and Jock McSteed find the castle holds the secret of something far more sinister...

Castle De'Ath is one of Season Four's unsung gems. Submarines in a moat, a xenophobic Laird, and a dead frogman who is four inches taller dead than alive, are all blended together by John Lucarotti.

Gordon Jackson shines as Ian De'Ath (thank goodness for a real Scots accent!), and is the character-who-seems-so-likely-to-have-done-it-he-never-could. He plays the part so well, and it isn't surprising that he was soon to make his name very well known in Upstairs, Downstairs and The Professionals.

The best scene is where Mrs Peel sits on a miniature set of bagpipes (toot!), plays a reel, and Steed does a very silly sword dance. Why can't they make stuff like this in the Nineties? And watch out for the tag scene - they sure don't make cars like that any more, either! (9)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Station is another Avengers classic, which were the rule, rather than the exception, in Season Five. An agent arranges to meet Steed and Mrs Peel. He travels on a train, gets off at Norborough, finds the station abandoned with no-one around, and in a state of total disrepair. He is killed, and Steed and Mrs Peel investigate his death. They find that the 8.10 to Norborough is not what it seems - a couple of newly weds, who take the train every night, and the conductor, all have something to hide. And what is the connection with the Prime Minister taking the same train the following day?

This is The Avengers at its best. No-one is what they seem to be, and there is a semi ludicrous plot. As for the method of passing on the coded messages, it's quite ingenious to say the least. John Laurie is fantastic as Crewe, a man who can identify a train by the noise it makes, and James Hayter is great as the jovial ticket collector, especially his dialogue with Steed ("Pop goes the diesel!"). Look out for Admiral Carmey's office, where everything is tilted to an angle to simulate life at sea. And of course, the Admiral's assistant is called Salt. Is his first initial 'C.'?

Another high-point is Diana Rigg listening to the tape recording made by Steed's brolly (!), and uttering such phrases as "Diddly - da" and "Boopity boop" which found their way onto the appalling Power Themes version of The Avengers theme.(10)

11:Noon Doomsday & Fog

Steed is recovering from an injured leg in *Noon Doomsday*, the opener on the second Tara tape, and some enemy agents plan to kill him while he's not at his best. Although Steed is at a maximum security recuperation centre, the enemy are able to gain access, and Tara can't convince the other injured agents to help her defend Steed.

As with the other Terry Nation Avengers scripts, like *Invasion of the Earthmen*, *Legacy of Death* and *Thingumajig*, *Noon Doomsday* fails to set the heather on fire. It's very slow moving, and not really that enjoyable. The villain of the piece, Kafka, is poorly drawn, and is as memorable as an old crisp packet. The other characters are also forgettable, and there are none of the quirky characters which the series is famed for. TP McKenna is surprisingly unable to shine. But look out for Anthony Ainley in a minor role - if you can see through the bandages.

There is very little to amuse, as the dialogue is very flat, but Mother provides a wry grin, as he quaffs his way through Steed's drinks cabinet. *Noon Doomsday* just goes to prove that when the Thorson Avengers was bad, it was woeful. (5)

Fortunately, *Noon Doomsday*'s failings are countered by the brilliance of *Fog*. The Gaslight Ghoul is stalking the streets of London, some 80 years after his previous murders in the city. Visiting diplomats are being killed by the Ghoul, a bearded man, in long, flowing cape, and top hat, who escapes the scene of the crime in a hansom cab. Steed joins the Gaslight Ghoul Club who seek to solve the identities of the Ghoul's victims. His job to find the killer is made harder, as every club member looks like the Ghoul.

Fog shows The Avengers at its best. Fog-filled London, cobbled streets, hansom cabs and men who sharpen sword-sticks on street corners are taken as gospel, an everyday part of life. Quite how this could exist is beyond me, but the ludicrousness of the situation is just pure Avengers. The sets and costumes are perfect, and the story perfectly captures the Victorian atmosphere that other programmes have so often strived to achieve, and failed horribly.

Steed in particular gets into the fling of things, adopting Victorian garb to fit in with the story's setting, and Mother provides some humour, driving through the foggy streets (and even Tara's flat!) in his car. Without a doubt, *Fog* makes Volume Eleven worth buying on its own, and earns a worthy (10).

12:The Super Secret Cypher Snatch & All Done With Mirrors

A pattern seems to emerging with the Thorson tapes - for every good episode on a tape, there's a turkey with it. In the case of Volume Twelve, *The Super Secret Cypher Snatch* is the poor story.

An agent is shot dead in front of a security guard at Cypher HQ, and his body bundled into a window cleaner's van. Webster, the director of Cypher HQ, sees the agent's death, but later denies seeing him at all. Tara takes up employment there, as strange goings on continue to happen at the HQ. But why does Tara remember it having rained, when the ground is as dry as a bone?

While *The Super Secret Cypher Snatch* is typical Avengers, that is where it falls down. It fails to break any new ground. There's a feeling of "Seen it before" about the whole thing from start to end. Normally, window cleaners from the Classy Glass Company stealing secrets from Cypher HQ would be original, but Snatch just seemed to be relying on a tried and tested formula. Although *Snatch* is similar to another Thorson story *False Witness* in many ways, at least the latter broke new ground, by adding a new twist to it. Although watchable, *Snatch* just doesn't have very much to excite, and the 'wacky character of the week', Classy Glass' proprietor, Lather, isn't really all that amusing. *The Super Secret Cypher Snatch* is lucky to snatch a (5).

All Done with Mirrors is one of those stories that, although highly watchable, isn't brilliant either. Mother tells Steed he is to be kept under arrest (held by girls in swimsuits) after secrets escaped from at the Carmadoc Research Establishment which he recently visited. Tara is assigned to investigate the Establishment, where they are trying to harness the power of sunlight. People are being killed, and eventually Tara is forced off a cliff edge, and plummets towards the rocks below...

Linda Thorson carries the story very well, in the absence of Patrick Macnee (obviously it was his turn to go on holiday). Compare her performance here with that of *Invasion of the Earthmen*, and it's clear that she's come on leaps and bounds.

Although an interesting idea, with light being used for all manner of means, there just seems to be something missing, a spark that would make it really good. Avengers, instead of being just good. It could quite easily have been an episode of any other sixties fantasy series. Of the guest stars, it is a young Dinsdale Landen who shines as Watney, the very earnest trainee agent who has to help Tara. Watch for the 'falling down the staircase in the lighthouse' routine - rather funny, if a touch obvious. I pity the poor stuntman, though. Ouch!

Nice photography and direction help to make *All Done with Mirrors* a (7).

Tapes 1,3,4 reviewed by Alistair McGown
Tapes 2,6,10,11,12 by Kenny Smith
Tapes 5,7,8,9 by Anthony Brown

Star Trek: Sarek

By A C Crispin (Simon & Schuster £9 99 Hardback)

SAREK, suspicious at the unlikely alliance between Starfleet officers (both Human and Vulcan), Klingon renegades and Romulans quite logically suspects there was something behind the scenes influencing the events chronicled in *The Undiscovered Country*. With the aid of Spock, Kirk, and the Enterprise, he uncovers the truth and sets the galaxy to rights. On the way he has to deal with his relationship with Spock, the death of Amanda, a Romulan Plot decades in the making, a dangerous fringe movement on Earth, hostile and friendly Klingon politics, the kidnap of Kirk's last living relative, and do some espionage...all while wrestling with the conflicts of duty, logic, and cultures.

The novel has three storylines — one follows Sarek, another follows Kirk (Spock actively linking these two), and the third follows Peter Kirk, the Captain's nephew from *Operation Annihilate*, now an adult final-year Starfleet cadet who infiltrates the human isolationist movement and ends up kidnapped by the mind-controlled Klingon ambassador Kamarag from *Star Treks* IV and VI. In captivity he falls in love with Kamarag's niece, Valdyr, and their relationship becomes an important part of the tale.

Spock and Sarek, as they were developed in *The Lost Years* and *Spock's World*, are my favourite vulcanoids. Anne Crispin's previous STAR TREK novels I could only call (while promising) moderately fair and somewhat immature in style and content. So when I saw she was the author of what was promoted as the complete life of Sarek I was prepared to be bitterly disappointed.

I'm overjoyed to say I couldn't have been more wrong. "Adequate" might be high praise indeed from a Vulcan, but I'm not Vulcan, so I'll have to say a bit more than that. Fortunately it'll be easy to praise *Sarek*. It's got it all; action, romance, drama, tragedy, mystery, suspense, humour, and intrigue. I've no doubt at all that *Sarek* is the best, the finest, the greatest STAR TREK novel ever published. Now that's some hype coming from a cynical old bitch like me so I'm going to have to work pretty hard to justify it.

Although the novel makes reference to no less than sixty episodes, five films, and many of the novels, particularly the latter ones by Dillard and Duane, there's not one single drop of ornamental or gratuitous continuity. You don't have to be a STAR TREK expert to understand *Sarek* — all the back-references are explained, and unlike lesser authors Crispin doesn't just quote, she represents the past from a different viewpoint so that it's a fresh insight to what we already know. She manages to add extra dimensions to what she's borrowed from the past: she doesn't just use the lore, she adds to it, enriches it, and deepens it. The Klingonese used isn't just the hackneyed phrases from Marc Okrand's invented language we're used to seeing tossed in just to please the fan-boys but is, refreshingly, appropriate to the characters and what's happening in the story. She even manages forward continuity, using events in *Sarek* to set the stage for THE NEXT GENERATION'S *Sarek* and *Unification* episodes making those stories richer and deeper: now that took *real* skill. The whole story is completely consistent with the canon and every reference to the lore is so rightly interwoven into the story that it's an integral part of the plot or the tale's development. This is the right way to use the canon. It's obvious that *Sarek* was a labour of love written with sensitivity and affection: there's no hack work here. If other TREK authors were to use Anne Crispin's style as a role model we readers would benefit a hundred fold.

The depth and insight we gain into every character, no matter how small a part they play, their personality and motivations, is without fault or peer. Through the device of Amanda's diaries we see aspects of Sarek, Spock, and Amanda that we wouldn't otherwise have been able to explore. There were many nice little touches too; one example was Klingon females being subordinate to males in this Original TREK era, when we know they've been emancipated by the TNG era, that gave the story an historical feeling that enhanced its realism.

Crispin's storytelling is excellent. The novel is superbly paced, dialogue is crisp and lifelike, the narrative clear and concise without faults or grammatical trip wires for the unwary. In spite of its length, there isn't one single paragraph of padding: every word is there for a reason. And even though the plot is complex and detailed Crispin presents every aspect clearly without becoming bogged down. She not only leaves no loose ends, she even ties up many of those left in the time gap between *The Undiscovered Country* and *Unification*. Crispin is so good she can even take a STAR TREK cliché, like a Klingon with a grudge against Kirk — the bane of less able authors — and make it fresh, new, and use it to good effect. Her humour is never contrived; it flows from the personality of the characters and is perfectly integrated with the story; except for the joke about Shakespeare "in the original Klingon": it wasn't funny the first time round either.

The only doubt about the story I had was Amanda's age: she only looked 50/60ish in *Star Trek IV* but Crispin has her in her 90s, only three or four years (by Stardate) later (but then, an earlier book, *The Vulcan Academy Murders*, suggested that her life had been extended by a rejuvenative healing technique. So maybe that's OK). The Simon and Schuster hype for *Sarek* said it "...spans Sarek's life and illustrious career..." so I'd hoped to discover who the 'son-of-Sarek' whose wedding Picard attended was (it surely can't have been Spock?), how his second wife Perrin came into his life, and what the disagreement he had with Spock over the Cardassians was that lead to their later estrangement. But, disappointingly, the novel only spans from his meeting with Amanda to about a year after *Star Trek VI*, so those things remain untold. There's mileage left in the story of Sarek that we've yet to discover, and I wonder what happened to Peter Kirk and Valdyr: it was obvious they intend to marry. But the biggest disappointment of all was that I finished it — I wanted to know what happened next, I was left hungering for more, more, more: and that's always the sign of a great novel.

I sincerely hope that if Simon & Schuster or Pocket ever commission those tales it's given to Crispin to bring to life; she proven that she's well worthy to take up the crown of prime expert on Vulcans that's passed from Dorothy C Fontana, to Jeanne Dillard, to Diane Duane. Not a bad achievement for a fan turned author who started off with an unsolicited manuscript sent to Pocket Books.

If I was asked to name STAR TREK'S best novelists I would have added to the ladies above; Michael Jan Friedman, Vonda N McIntyre, and (until recently) Peter David, but after *Sarek*, first and foremost on that list must be Anne C Crispin. I have never been better entertained by a novel, set in any universe, than I was by *Sarek*. Simon & Schuster have reasonably priced this hardback (nearly £4 less than the average exploitative price of a hardback) under that of the average pre-recorded video, and this is a novel you'll want to read again and again, so although I'd normally say wait until the paperback's out, this time I can't: buy the hardback - it'll be worth it.

My deepest regret now is DWB's strict policy of giving books reviewed a whole-numbers-only-marks-out-of-ten figure. The editor will round out into that range any number outside it that a reviewer is silly enough to try and get away with. So knowing that it's futile, I'll stick to the rules, but, dear reader, please play a little game with me. Double the next number you see.(10)

The Patrian Transgression

By Simon Hawke (Pocket Books £4.50)

THE PATRIANS, a cat-like race, are requesting Federation membership and the Enterprise is sent with a Federation ambassador to negotiate their entry. On Patria there are terrorists, armed with Klingon Disruptors, and the Government are demanding UFP aid in the form of Phasers. But, all is not as it seems, and the Enterprise team untangle the webs woven by Patrian political intrigue, double dealing, plots, two terrorist groups, and the Police Mindcrimes Unit; a group of surgically created telepaths who've the power of summary execution for the crime of "Transgression by Intent": they can kill someone for thinking about committing a crime!

I must admit that when "Klingons" and "Prime Directive" appeared in the same paragraph I thought "Oh no, here we go again". Frankly after the appallingly awful *Here There Be Dragons* and the dreadful *Homeward* I wasn't looking forward to another Prime Directive screw-up mixed with an *A Private Little War* rehash. If I hadn't been reviewing it I wouldn't have read any further.

But I'm glad I persisted because Simon Hawke's novel didn't live down to the threatened mundanity of recent TNG fare. *The Patrian Transgression* is thankfully free of the blight of extraneous, gratuitous, inaccurate (and often contradictory) continuity that seems to be de rigueur for any STAR TREK these days. When Simon Hawke makes a reference to the past it's because the story needs it. This tale is set in the STAR TREK universe, it's not a tale about the STAR TREK universe: a much welcome breath of fresh air. Well done Simon.

Once Hawke has disposed of the obligatory Prime Directive debate he gets on with the story which was reasonably well paced for the most part. For my taste it could have done with a bit more description of Patria, more characterization of minor players who'd important roles, more about the Patrian's alienness besides how they looked, laughed, and greeted each other, and a bit less wordy-ness in the dialogue. There just wasn't enough 'differentness' about the Patrians to make them believably alien so they came across a tad two dimensional.

I liked the way plot gradually unravels, one piece of the jigsaw at a time, and when the true problems were finally revealed the solution the characters found was, if a bit over-dramatic, forgivable because it made such good copy. It would have been improved and had a more emotionally satisfying ending if we'd got to know the villain well enough to actually dislike him before he gets his comeuppance.

There's plenty of action and cliffhangers in between all the verbal and cerebral deduction. This was a reasonably enjoyable read. It was competently crafted and written. Not exceptional by any means but certainly a lot better than we've been palmed off with lately in the TNG books. (6)

Barbara Barrett

JOHN NATHAN TURNER once said he asked you back for Tom's final season but you wouldn't do it.

It might have been mentioned over a glass of wine and I didn't take him seriously, but I truly don't remember that.

You did say yes to the K9 AND COMPANY special.

Yes, and I kept coming back! John was very brave to do that. He gets a lot of stick but I thank him for that and I wish it could have happened better. It started out very auspiciously, with so many things against it. First of all we didn't have much time. I was doing GULLIVER IN LILLIPUT and it was the next step on, practically the next day. I went in and told — was it Eric Saward? — that I didn't like the script but he said it would be all right on the film. I don't know if days or weeks were taken away from us for filming, but what could have been worked out better didn't. There just wasn't the time to do it. Time is something you never have in the studio; that clock ticks around to 10 o'clock and if you haven't got it, that's it.

Also I think I did it wrong. I shouldn't have played it like the Sarah who was with the Doctor because I don't think Sarah without the Doctor stands up. I think I should have just played it different. I found it very difficult working with K9; you are going to save the Universe but you've still got to open the door for this tin dog!

The best thing I did on K9 & COMPANY was cut. I had to do this amazing scene (Damon Hill would have been proud!) where I had to drive along, thrust the car into reverse and speed off right at the beginning (I'm not a driver, I've got my licence but I haven't driven for years), and because it was overrunning they cut that. It has a wonderful bash at the start; Sarah was angry and she had a passion, but it never climbed back up after that for me. That's just a minor thing but I missed it.

Two years later came the *Five Doctors* special...

It was like a command performance! "Ooh, let's all go back and have fun" — that's how everyone treated it. Again how could poor Peter Moffat make it work; everyone had just a bite of the cherry. It's not a good enough reason that you want to do it; if you are going to do these things you must have the time to make them good. It didn't really work for me but I did enjoy it, and I met Peter for the first time. It was lovely meeting the other assistants so I could say "Are you cold too?" You've all been there so there is great camaraderie. I love seeing the other girls very much.

Sadie was born a couple of years later, which must have put paid to your career for a while?

I tried not to stop, but I'm not one of these amazing mums who can carry on working (good luck to those who can!). I went straight back after Sadie was born and did Alice in Wonderland for Barry Letts as the Dormouse. I also did Dempsey and Makepeace but precious little else really. I had this nanny and it was driving me up the wall, I couldn't do it. I should have kept my hand in more, but now, over these past 18 months, I really want to work again. It's much easier now, but back then I didn't have family around to help.

Did the rigours of motherhood come as a shock to you?

Oh yes, it did! It wasn't a conscious decision to stop acting to bring Sadie up, I just had to. Logistics as well. I have a husband who's an actor and you can't both go off to work. Who do you leave the child with? In our particular case it would have meant leaving her with a stranger every time. I tried keeping our nanny on but Brian and I were out of work from time to time and still paying her. So I just wasn't happy, and if you're not happy then you're not going to work well. I got to a point where I was watching the clock and just wanting to go home, so it was time to let someone else start taking the jobs.

You returned to television recently in the BBC sitcom Men of the World.

Did you like it ?-Thank you, so did I! It was lovely except that our scenes were at the end so all the scenes at the beginning had all the studio time. It always happens, I knew it would, so there were no cut-aways, no reverse shots, etc. By the time they got to my bit it was just boom-boom-finish. David Threlfall [*Lenny*] said, "We'll do that again", and I said, "We won't, look at the clock — it's 10 o'Clock!"

The Five Doctors - ©BBC Video

ELISABETH SLADEN

Part two of an interview conducted by Robert Cope with Robert Debney at The Midland Hotel, Manchester (3rd April 1994)

Is that the first major thing you've done for some time?

I did The Bill four years ago and some radio. Brian and I did a radio together which has just gone out [*Sir Colin's New Clothes, Radio 4, 30th March*] and *Paradise of Death* is on the radio again.

Going back in time to 1972, you did a DOOMWATCH - *Say Knife, Fat Man - wherein you played* a radical student, also called Sarah, alongside Anthony Andrews.

That's right, and lovely Geoffrey Palmer was in it. I don't remember much about it actually. Yes, it was my first telly in London.

You were on Meridian recently for a fast-paced, late night chat show...

I prefer to forget that, actually! There was a phone-in where someone could win a holiday and they had to guess which DOCTOR WHO ASSISTANT WAS IN THE TARDIS. I was invited down to Southampton and I thought 'I'll go down and talk about my radio programme', but when I got there for a rehearsal at 9 o'clock and asked how long I'd got, the presenter said "Forty seconds, if you are lucky". I said what!? We went away for an hour, got made up, someone won the holiday and I was back in the car going home! It was basically a show for people coming out of the pubs. I thought it was OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS! There was a fella eating a piece of string and pulling it out of his stomach, there was a sex guru, someone walking on broken bottles... I felt in my element! I just want to push the Doctor Who radio shows now - if we could do some more of those it would be smashing.

The irrepressible Sadie encounters an old friend of her mother's (©Tony Clark)

I was dubious when I first heard about them because I was never overly fond of *The Pescatons*...

It was terrible! We just went into a studio one afternoon, had a laugh and a drink and went home. It was terribly quick. *The Paradise of Death* was excellent, it has a life (it went to number 1 in the spoken word sales chart), but it's got to prove itself on Radio 2 before they will do any more.

...and I never thought DOCTOR WHO could work that well on the radio.

Oh yes it does, it's your imagination given full flight.

Let's talk about *Dimensions in Time*.

What's that?

The CHILDREN IN NEED sketch featuring the world and his wife!

I remember quite distinctly that I was sick all over the set of EASTENDERS! Sadie was in a SCREEN ONE play and I went to the press showing at the BBC, and the next day was this CHILDREN IN NEED thing. I knew I was in trouble when, at 7am, the make-up girl said, "Oh my God!" — I was green!

I don't really want to see Sarah on screen as me anymore, I'm too old for that, it's past. I didn't want to do it but John rang up: "It's for CHILDREN IN NEED, and it will look awful if you don't do it. It's for a good cause, if other people can do it why not you?"

Lalla Ward said she didn't understand a word of it.

Good old Lalla, she's brilliant! I did some American conventions with Lalla, she makes me laugh.

Looking to the future, what would you ideally prefer to see yourself doing, and who would you like to work with?

Oh, so many things, but then you put yourself in a box you haven't attained. I can't do that. When I left Doctor WHO I did a six-part series for Granada with Duggie Brown called *Take My Wife*, with Victor Spinetti and Joan Benham. I do love comedy, there's just not a lot of it around at the moment. I would like a stab at another character on television, but it's very different now. You used to be part of a company; you had your calls each day so you got to know people while you were working with them. Every job is like a first day at school; you have to go in and form relationships, which if you're lucky help with the performance. Now if you do a telly, with so much on film you just do your one day and go. It's a kind of madhouse situation where you're in make-up, put in a costume which you have probably not seen before and you do it and go home. That concept is very alien to a lot of actors.

Do you think TV is becoming more of a business and less of an art-form?

I think it boils down to money. They don't have you in for longer nowadays because they can't pay you. I think that's a shame but what can you do? You need the actor-managers back. People who like actors and know how actors work.

Kenneth Branagh is taking big steps towards that isn't he?

More power to his elbow, he's wonderful. He gives jobs to actors, he creates work. I think you have to go about creating your own work now, much more so than ten years ago.

You used to go from one job to another, and heard about all the other work that was around too ("Have you been up for such and such...?"). But now it's all closed shops because there's so little work around.

I think now that whereas the theatre was once the core of an actor's life, people are now coming out of drama school and going straight into film and television...

That's right, and when we were at the Library Theatre in Manchester [ref: DWB126] we did Shakespeare in three weeks, other plays in just a week. You had a bash at everything. Now the only place you'll do Shakespeare is at the RSC. Millions of actors today

Above:presenting STEPPING STONES with Keith Barron (©Yorkshire Television)

will never do a Shakespeare.

I do feel that some of the people now coming out of drama schools, particularly the big London ones, seem to have a star-ish attitude and are not prepared to really graft at it.

I think you have a greater respect if you are prepared to pitch in and do things. There was a time on DOCTOR WHO when we weren't getting something right, and it was Dougie Camfield who said, "I'm going to ask everyone, and it doesn't matter if you can't, to come in on Sunday." Everyone came (Tom brought pork pies and hot soup!). We all turned up to get it right. I think most actors want to do that now but people are afraid to because if you move a chair someone will say "Don't touch that"! There is a kind of hierarchy now because everyone is protecting their own little corner. I don't know where the answer lies, I just want to work. I love actors, I miss them.

Can I tell you a little story? You know you were saying about Tom and my leaving the show? They shot that scene but didn't shoot it at the end, we shot it on the second day (I think they did that on purpose). On the last studio day there was a scene where Tom has to carry Eldrad (it was when she was wounded and Tom had to carry her across a bridge and up a slippery slope). Judith Paris is a friend of mine and we were both feeling out of it because it was our last day, and unintentionally (I think) Tom slipped first and we kept on doing it. We were hysterical with laughter and they were going mad at us. It was meant to be a slippery slope but we were all over the place! It was a very false sort of laughter at first, but I was holding my sides in the end. That was a kind of release for the tension of us both leaving.

You were reunited with Tom Baker at last year's Panopticon celebration.

I didn't know he was there! I was feeling my way down the stairs in the dark after my panel and I heard this deep voice say "Elisabeth..." It was *brilliant*! I looked up and he said, "Sorry I haven't seen you for ages". We met up afterwards for a good old chat and a gossip. When we got bored in rehearsals he used to do this really funny Dean Martin impression — he would crease us up. He is such a wonderful man, it was just like old times seeing him again.

Elisabeth Sladen, thank you very much.

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